Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-THREE • NUMBER FOUR • APRIL 1987

The Guns of Watergate
Leonard Garment

Liberty, Equality, Sexuality
Allan Bloom

Is Messianism Good for the Jews?
Jacob Katz

Requiem for the "Establishment"
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Speak of the Devil
Jaroslav Pelikan

Books in Review: Scott McConnell / Richard S. Levy
George Russell / Terry Teachout / Alvin H. Bernstein

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE / $3.50

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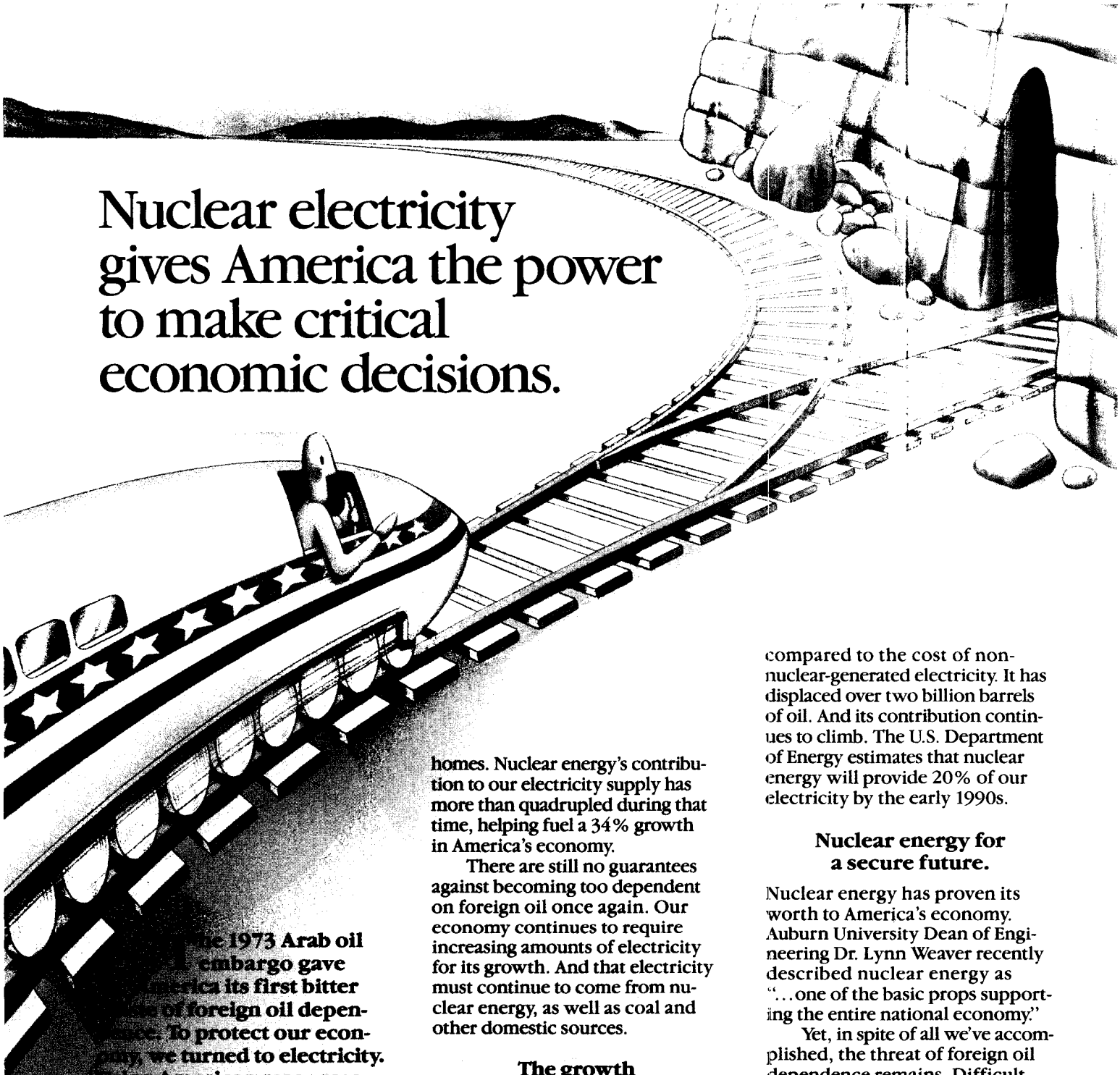

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Commentary

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $3.50, $36 a year; 2 years $68, 3 years $99—Add $7.00 per year for all foreign, including Canada and Latin America—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.
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EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

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Letters from Readers

American Blacks

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Glenn C. Loury's article on the "discovery" of self-help by some black elected officials and leaders of civil-rights organizations ["Who Speaks for American Blacks?," January] presents a competent survey of vexations long suffered by those of us who have differed from the line laid down by the civil-rights establishment.

Mr. Loury accurately describes the deterioration of rhetoric from Martin Luther King's earlier speeches to those of various activists today. Hence I find it curious that in recounting Dr. King's early views of "the American dream," Mr. Loury does not note that the American dream Dr. King was referring to was the Declaration of Independence. It is vitally important that, in this year when we are celebrating the bicentennial of the Constitution, all Americans reflect on the relationship of the Constitution and the Declaration to contemporary political issues, not least of all to civil rights.

It is easy to lose sight of this relationship, for the civil-rights establishment has encouraged black Americans to act and to be perceived as another interest group. When self-proclaimed black leaders reduce differences with their political, social, and economic agenda to an attack on fundamental rights they trivialize the very rights they claim to be defending. This irresponsible practice is dangerous, for it puts up for barter fundamental rights, rights that belong to all regardless of race.

To begin with a clean slate, and banish the dangerous consequences racial politics poses for all Americans, we need a sober reexamination of our fundamental documents. Having come so far in eliminating legal discrimination, we cannot fall into the trap of thinking that the equality of the Declaration of Independence, its "laws of nature and of nature's God," are mere sloganeering, a cloak for the crass self-interest of any race. A nation that is not based on race, that takes its bearings by standards that transcend race and apply to all humanity, is what our fundamental ideals demand.

Martin Luther King will always remain a controversial figure. But men and women of all parties should appreciate his great achievement of challenging Americans to live up to the higher law of America. In this year of the bicentennial it would be the greatest misfortune for the successors of the civil-rights movement not to draw on the strongest resource, the Constitution and the higher law inspiring it.

CLARENCE THOMAS
Chairman
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a civil-rights lawyer for the American Jewish Committee who has filed many legal briefs in the past twenty years in support of the rights of black Americans, I have some mixed reactions to Glenn C. Loury's article, "Who Speaks for American Blacks?" There is so much in the article that has the ring of truth, it is a pity that Mr. Loury leaves himself vulnerable to criticism in some of his other statements.

On the positive side, Mr. Loury is on solid ground when he urges that "young men who father children and then walk away from their responsibility to support them" and "those who carry on the drug trade in the ghettos, or who violently assault and brutalize their black neighbors" be viewed not as victims but rather as "the creators of victims." In other words, he is saying, blacks (and whites, too) should stop excusing the malefactors and stop giving them permission, in effect, to continue to engage in atrocious behavior. Good.

Mr. Loury is also very much on target when he says that "some social tasks are better undertaken through the 'mediating structures' of private, voluntary associations" to "mobilize the coercive resources available within the black community itself to enforce behavioral norms" in dealing with crime, teen-age pregnancy, and staggering school-dropout rates. The TV show *60 Minutes* recently did a segment on the board of directors of a black housing project in St. Louis which sends a clear message to all tenants: if you or a member of your family cause trouble for other tenants, you will be evicted. It seems to be working.

Police brutality, which blacks have experienced all too often, of

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course, is a terrible thing and must never be tolerated or excused. Some years ago, however, a leader of the Harlem branch of the NAACP remarked that the brutality that most black people in Harlem suffer so frequently is no longer that of the white racist cop (though it used to be), but rather that of the black criminal. The tragic reality is that the leading cause of death among young black men today is homicide, almost entirely at the hands of other young black men; only a tiny fraction of these deaths is in any way attributable to police brutality. In substance, this is what Mr. Loury is saying, and he is absolutely right about it.

But Mr. Loury also makes some other points which are, at best, problematical. He condemns "those who would 'lead' their people to permanent dependency on handouts from others." Of course. But does that accurately reflect the agenda of most mainstream black leaders? Not in my experience. The National Urban League, for one example, traditionally has concentrated not on "handouts" but on the real needs of black people for job counseling, training, and placement. And Jesse Jackson, gravely flawed though he may be in other respects, to his credit for many years has been admonishing black youngsters to apply themselves to mastering their studies with the same diligence with which they apply themselves to mastering their skills at basketball. Jackson has said to them things like "the doors of opportunity are opening up, but what good is it if you are too drunk or too drugged to walk on through?"

Mr. Loury notes also, in connection with the observance of Martin Luther King Day, that President Reagan "had opposed civil-rights legislation in the early 1960's." He is referring, of course, to the fact that Reagan came out against enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as the Voting Rights Act of 1965, because he had serious doubts about their constitutionality. Moreover, Reagan had said at the time that he did not wish to "humiliate the South"—the white South, that is. Mr. Loury goes on to say that "Reagan cannot change the positions he took in 1964." Obviously Reagan could not and cannot turn the clock back. But he certainly could have altered his stance in recent years, had he chosen to do so. What is so dismaying to many people is that, on the whole, he has not chosen to do so.

Under President Reagan, the Department of Justice, in case after case, has sought to limit the reach of the civil-rights laws, as well as of its own civil-rights enforcement authority. For a graphic illustration, in the case of *Thornburg* v. *Gingles* in 1985, which involved a challenge by blacks (under the amended Voting Rights Act) to an allegedly discriminatory legislative-redistricting plan in North Carolina, the Department of Justice backed the state's narrow interpretation of the law. In a most extraordinary development, several key Republicans (including Senator Robert Dole) joined the Republican National Committee in actually filing a brief in the Supreme Court opposing the administration's position in this case. The final ruling by the Supreme Court decisively rebuffed both the state and the Department of Justice.

As Mr. Loury must be aware, it is no mere accident of history that nearly nine out of ten blacks have voted against President Reagan, as well as against those candidates who supported him. In fact, in the midterm elections this past November, blacks were the "swing" vote in a number of close U.S. senatorial races where Democrats won, thereby gaining control of the Senate.

"Who speaks for American blacks?" They speak for themselves, loudly and clearly, every time they cast their ballots. Another question is: who has been listening?

SAMUEL RABINOVE
Legal Director
American Jewish Committee
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Glenn C. Loury writes that if William Lucas had been elected Governor of Michigan, "he would have been the first black governor since Reconstruction." This is an error: no black has ever been governor of any state. As evidence, let me cite Carl N. Degler's *Out of Our Past*: "Negroes, of course, did hold some offices under Reconstruction; in fact, outside of the position of governor, which no Negro held in any state, black men filled each executive office at one time or another."

SAM REYBURN
Bronx, New York

GLENN C. LOURY writes:

Samuel Rabinove agrees with me that it is time to stop making excuses for things—that one can and should publicly distinguish between good and bad behavior on the part of people living in ghettos, commending the good and condemning the bad. He appreciates that the mediating structures of private, voluntary organizations are better suited than government to deal with severe behavioral problems. He also acknowledges that the quality of life of poor blacks is more threatened by the violent behavior of a few of their neighbors than by the "brutality" of law-enforcement personnel. Yet he finds "problematical" my assertion that politically liberal black leaders have led their people to depend on transfers from the larger society, and believes that the nine-to-one electoral rejection of Ronald Reagan by blacks in 1984 provides a sufficient expression of their political views.

In making this argument, Mr. Rabinove has missed the principal point of my article, which is that there are *ideological* implications, with political content, to the embrace of self-help strategies by blacks, content which many liberals would rather ignore even as they very belatedly take up some of the themes suggested by the personal-responsibility, self-help outlook. Advocating self-help means that one believes there is reasonably fair opportunity for achievement by members of all races in this society, that one thinks persons should be held accountable for their actions, especially those which are harmful to others, and that one regards the private voluntary sector as better suited than government to the doing of much which will have to be undertaken if stricken communities and devastated lives are to be reconstructed. These are not exactly the principles guiding political advocacy on behalf of blacks today.

I am an admirer of the leadership of John Jacob at the National Urban League. His organization, which has always been at the "conservative" end of the spectrum of civil-rights groups, is in the forefront of what I hope will become a vital movement among blacks. Yet I am also a close reader of the pronouncements and legislative proposals of the members of the Congressional Black Caucus. The League's activities, while welcome,

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can hardly be taken as representative of the posture of today's black leadership. And that posture, I continue to assert, places primary emphasis on the responsibility of "white America" to "do right" by its black folk. The notion of blacks as America's preeminent victims, as persons presumptively damaged by a racist America and in need of the sympathetic attention of their fellow citizens, remains very much intact. Mr. Rabinove need only read some of the recent speeches by Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP, or note the activities of Hosea Williams in the wake of the Forsythe County affair, to see what I mean. I have also observed Jesse Jackson's exhortations to youngsters to clean up their lives; I warmly applaud his undertakings in this direction. But I have noticed as well that he spends the other 99 percent of his time engaging in a rather different form of exhortation—one with an underlying ideological perspective far removed from that proffered in my article.

No, Ronald Reagan is not popular among blacks. Yet the black vote count for the President, or for other Republican candidates, hardly exhausts what is interesting and important about the political life of the group. And yes, there are many who believe that the civil-rights policies of this Justice Department have been injurious to black interests. One of the things which those who would "speak for blacks" must communicate is the concern of the group that civil-rights enforcement be vigorous and effective. Clarence Thomas, a black, appointed and reappointed by President Reagan as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, surely shares this concern. Nevertheless, as his letter reveals, he has problems with the ideological posture of many in the civil-rights establishment. One finds him talking of the deep meaning of our republic's fundamental documents, and of our common stake in preserving that meaning—an *American* interest which transcends the narrower "special interest" of any particular group. With this sentiment I heartily agree, as readers of my recent article, "Matters of Color—Blacks and the Constitutional Order" (*Public Interest*, Winter 1987), will discover.

For such a sentiment to become more commonplace in the public pronouncements of black leaders, there will have to be some overt political competition for group leadership. It was precisely such competition in which William Lucas was engaged in the gubernatorial campaign in Michigan last year. (Thanks, by the way, to Sam Reyburn for his historical correction.) I would like to think that this quietly competent black public administrator—formerly an FBI agent and sheriff of Wayne County—was one voice "speaking for blacks" when he sought the highest office in his state. As for those frightened black liberals who, when faced with his moderate challenge, accused him of abetting the "genocide" of his own people and called him an "Uncle Tom"—it seems clear that they were speaking for themselves.

The Contras

To the Editor of Commentary:

The article by Penn Kemble and Arturo J. Cruz, Jr., "How the Nicaraguan Resistance Can Win" [December 1986], is no less valid now than it was before the so-called Iran-*contra* scandal blew up. The facts show that none of the fundamentals has changed in Nicaragua to merit a change in U.S. policy. . . . In 1986, the U.S. Congress judged the Nicaraguan Communists to be enough of a threat to allocate $100 million in military and humanitarian assistance to the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN). What has changed since then? Absolutely nothing.

The daily press hype of "new revelations" about the Iran-*contra* connection plays right into the hands of the most liberal wing of the Democratic party which hopes to derail the President's Nicaragua *initiatives*. This approach is testimony to the fact that the Democrats have no policy alternatives and have therefore been relegated to defeating the President's policy on the basis of peripheral events. The liberals have long since lost the ability to defend the Sandinistas. The John Kerrys, Christopher Dodds, and Peter Kostmayers of the world would have the FDN pay for mistakes made in the Mid-

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dle East. Is this sound foreign policy? I think not. . . .

I feel, therefore, that *contra* aid is still safe for the foreseeable future. The value, then, of the article lies in its effective articulation of the fight we can expect over new funding to the democratic resistance. I think it is helpful to expand on some of Messrs. Kemble and Cruz's observations. For example, they only lightly touch on the fact that battlefield strategy for the FDN is inappropriately being formulated in Washington by a bunch of armchair freedom fighters. The battlefield has a dynamic all its own which must be allowed to unfold unencumbered by congressional expectations for sexy, short-run victories. . . . Supporters of aid to the *contras* have been too lax in proposing a realistic set of criteria which the resistance can meet—both politically and militarily—and by which we can judge its effectiveness.

At present, Democrats . . . say, "Look, we gave them $100 million and they don't even hold any Nicaraguan territory." Now everyone knows that in a guerrilla war holding territory is not an accurate benchmark of success; but this specious argument, repeated over and over, has been gaining some credibility by default, since proponents of democracy in Nicaragua have done little to counter it.

Messrs. Kemble and Cruz offer constructive criticism of conservatives, saying that they have been sugarcoating the length and intensity of this struggle, which requires sustained U.S. support. So true! The problem with softpedaling the seriousness of the Nicaraguan conflict is that it will make it difficult to maintain constituent support over the long haul. Let us bear in mind that it takes years for an insurgent force to become militarily viable, so it makes no sense to sell the policy as a quick fix. . . .

Those of us who support the democratic resistance (I write as Foreign Affairs Legislative Assistant to Representative Robert K. Dornan, R-Cal.) must also consider framing the debate around the moral argument. It is now clear that only a small portion of Middle America feels a tangible threat when President Reagan cites concrete evidence of Soviet military assistance to the Sandinistas and explains the geostrategic importance of the Caribbean sea lanes. I think we can garner more support at the grass-roots level by supplementing the President's approach with examples such as the little-known fact that thousands of political prisoners in Nicaragua are beaten and tortured on a daily basis. Where is the public outrage over Nicaragua when there is so much over South Africa? I think that it is incumbent upon us to see to it that this double standard does not continue unchallenged in the press.

Additionally, I have heard very little analysis of . . . the evils of Communism. Everyone assumes that Communism is bad, but Americans do not naturally associate Nicaragua's Sandinistas with Communism. A strategy which drives home the point that Communism forecloses all possibilities for future generations to choose the type of government they want will appeal to an ingrained American value which gives freedom of choice one of the highest priorities.

Overall, the article was excellent precisely because it set the tone for a whole new debate while providing valuable insights into the process of gaining a stronger constituency for the democratic resistance—one that will outlast the Reagan Presidency.

JAMES M. SKINNER
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Penn Kemble and Arturo J. Cruz, Jr. are to be congratulated on their excellent article on the Nicaraguan freedom fighters and how they can win. We need many more such theoretical articles dealing with fundamental principles if freedom-fighter movements are to succeed, in Nicaragua and elsewhere around the world.

Two points are worth emphasizing. The first has to do with the military successes of anti-Communist insurgencies. Although it is clearly much easier to overthrow a government of the Somoza type than a Communist regime (as Edén Pastora has learned to his sorrow), it is also true that anti-Communist insurgencies enjoy some of the same theoretical advantages over conventional forces that Communist insurgencies do. But in addition, they have one large stimulus denied the latter: the fact that Communist regimes by their nature war on their own populations, which non-Communist governments generally do not. The people have no choice but to respond to that assault: by submission, by flight, or by resistance. In the last decade, quite independently of American policies, ever more victims of Communism have chosen the last option, and in so doing have discovered, as the authors put it, that "the Communists are really not ten feet tall." Indeed, the freedom fighters in Mozambique may be in a position to win their victory before long without having received any assistance at all from the United States.

The second point has to do with the vital importance of the political struggle. In terms of men in the field, anti-Communist insurgencies are generally much more powerful than Communist insurgencies at a comparable state of development, or even at the point when they take power. As Messrs. Kemble and Cruz point out, the Nicaraguan resistance now has some 18,000 men in the field as contrasted to the 3,000 the Sandinistas had at their disposal when they triumphed. But the transfer of power within Nicaragua was essentially political: those who disposed of political power (especially outside the country) were more than willing to be persuaded of the strength of the Communist insurgency in the field, and then simply granted the Communists by political means what they would have had difficulty in winning purely militarily. This is even more clearly the case in Angola and Mozambique; in both countries a left-wing Portuguese government hastily transferred power to local Communist movements. . . .

In my view, some of the anti-Communist insurgencies in the world today could probably win without any substantial United States aid (although we stand morally condemned if we refuse it to them). But they will be crippled in the international arena after they take power if they lack the political support which it should be our task to provide them with.

CHARLES A. MOSER
Freedom League
Washington, D.C.

Conservative Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . While I do not disagree with Howard Singer's critique of Conservative Judaism ["The Judaism Born in America," December 1986], I do not accept it as applying only

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to Conservatism, as opposed to Orthodoxy and Reform. (Reconstructionism is perhaps too young to have reached the same level of disillusionment). . . .

If Conservative laymen do not live up to the two items of ritual mentioned in the preamble to the constitution of the United Synagogue of America, *kashrut* and the Sabbath, do the laymen in Orthodox synagogues live up to them, and do they observe the many more *mitzvot* involved in Orthodox commitment? Do Reform laymen live up to the ethical requirements of Reform theology? I have no knowledge of any congregation in any of the three movements that demands a statement of faith or a promise to observe commandments before membership is granted. . . .

The history of the Reform rabbinate is replete with examples of conflicts between radical preachers and conservative (with a small c) boards of directors that attempted to stifle them. I mention only two names: Stephen Wise and Abraham Feinberg. And how many Orthodox rabbis were either forced to leave their pulpits or compromise their principles when Orthodox laymen did not understand them, differed with them, or disputed their leadership roles? How many Orthodox rabbis have served in Conservative pulpits? How many Conservative rabbis served in Orthodox pulpits in the old days? How many Reform rabbis have served in Conservative pulpits?

As for "Right," "Left," and "Center," it is perhaps more accurate to speak of nine movements in American Judaism, each of the traditional three being composed of three subgroups. In Orthodoxy, there are several rabbinic bodies, representing traditional *yeshivot*, Yeshiva University and Hebrew Theological College graduates, and free-lance groups. Even in the dominant modern Orthodox body, the Rabbinical Council of America, there are disputes over affiliation with boards of rabbis that include non-Orthodox rabbis, and with the Synagogue Council of America, which includes non-Orthodox organizations. Firebrands within the Council have organized fringe groups attacking the policies of the middle and left wings when they have uttered sounds of flexibility or intimations of the possibility of adapting Jewish law.

In the (Reform) Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) there is no uniformity. The vote approving patrilineal descent as a criterion of Jewishness was not unanimous. The number of Reform rabbis who perform intermarriages without conversion of the non-Jewish partner has ranged from one to several hundred to half the total membership of the CCAR.

Civil rights, social issues, economic justice may receive differing degrees of emphasis in the Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative), the Central Conference, and the Rabbinical Council, but they are not totally absent from the agenda of any of these groups. While Conservative rabbis may have drifted into social action, and have had to meet the challenge of relevance, Reform rabbis have drifted toward ritual, and have even discussed the possibility of establishing codes of con-

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duct and following halakhic guides. When it concerns them, Orthodox rabbis have entered the public arena on the issues of abortion, segregation of the sexes in public-school remedial classes, and campaigns against crime in mixed neighborhoods. . . .

We can grant this distinction: in liberal times, the central position draws from the two extremes. In radical times, times of crisis, the two extremes draw from the center. But precisely in such times it is necessary to have the center as a balance between the two poles. It is easy to criticize the middle position as being wishy-washy. But the more consistent positions to the Right and the Left may be very right, or very wrong!

Mr. Singer seems to realize this. . . . He begins by saying: "The story of [the Conservative movement's] metamorphosis is in great measure the story of American Jewry." And he ends by saying, apropos the desire to preserve religious tradition by being open to modernity: "Perhaps no religious movement in the United States has ever articulated such a goal so clearly or sought it so consciously as has Conservative Judaism." Is he saying that all American Judaism, even all American religion, is in the same boat?

[Rabbi] JACOB CHINITZ
Halifax, Nova Scotia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Howard Singer's article, "The Judaism Born in America," calls for certain observations. There is, first of all, the article's title, which conveys the impression that the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and, subsequently, Conservative ideology and the Conservative movement, had their roots in America. This, of course, is far from the mark. Instead, they reflect the struggles which had developed in Germany and Hungary in the first half of the 19th century between the progressive forces, which came to be known as "Reform," and the traditionalist ones, which came to be known as "Orthodox."

In America, the Seminary was organized by the traditionalist groups who rallied around Sabato Morais in order to stem the tide of Reform, led by Isaac Mayer Wise, an immigrant rabbi from Bohemia. Wise founded the Union of American Hebrew Congregations in 1873 and, two years later, the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, which became the principal address of Reform Judaism in America. The early intellectual spokesman for the traditionalists was another immigrant rabbi, Alexander Kohut, educated in Hungary and at the Rabbinical Seminary of Breslau, Germany, which was headed by Zacharias Frankel. Like his teacher, Kohut expounded the historical approach to the interpretation of Judaism, stating: "While 'nonessential' religious practices could be changed to enhance the piety of the congregation, these changes had to be based upon the Torah as interpreted by rabbinical law and introduced by learned men." And further: "A Reform which seeks to progress without the Mosaic-rabbinical tradition is a deformity—a skeleton without flesh and sinew, without spirit and heart. It is suicide."

The arrival of Solomon Schechter as head of the Seminary fortified the historical ideology taught there. In his inaugural address of November 20, 1902, the famous scholar had this to say:

> We must either remain faithful to history or go the way of all flesh, and join the great majority. The teaching in the Seminary will be in keeping with this spirit, and thus largely confined to the exposition and elucidation of historical Judaism and its various manifestations.

Fortunately, similar views were also held by the lay leaders of the Seminary, Jacob H. Schiff and Louis Marshall, whom Singer's article characterizes as Reform Jews mainly interested in integrating the Yiddish-speaking immigrants into American society, and thereby changing their traditional way of life. . . .

Schiff was an observant Jew from Frankfurt, Germany, whose family included distinguished rabbis. In his youth, he had been a student at the religious school of Samson Raphael Hirsch, Germany's ardent champion of Orthodoxy. And when, prior to emigrating to America, he applied for a position, he wrote that he was a Sabbath observer. He remained loyal to tradition throughout his successful life in America. Thus, it should come as no surprise that he, too, was opposed to the idea of establishing an American-type Judaism as advocated by the Reform leaders from Cincinnati.

At the dedication of the Seminary's new building at 123rd Street, Manhattan (donated by Schiff) on April 26, 1903, this generous benefactor of all worthy causes had this to say:

> While Judaism in America, not as it is so frequently misnamed, "American Judaism," is particularly destined to continue the evolution which forever has been going forward in our religion, this cannot be accomplished by the radical tearing-down process which during recent decades has made such unchecked headway.

Similar views were held by Louis Marshall, who for twenty years served as chairman of the Seminary's board of directors (1909-29). This distinguished lawyer, son of a deeply religious German-born mother, found no inconsistency in being president of Temple Emanu-El (Reform) while providing for the growing needs of the faculty and students of the Seminary. . . . Marshall also tried to get close to the Yiddish-speaking masses and assist them in their adjustment to America. . . .

My own research in connection with a soon-to-be published book, *The Jewish Theological Seminary Library at One Hundred Years*, has brought to light yet another characteristic episode in Marshall's life. While president of Temple Emanu-El, and engaged in the construction and design of a new building on Fifth Avenue, he wrote to Professor Louis Ginzberg, the Seminary's renowned authority on Jewish law, for his views on "the limitations upon decorations imposed by the practices of traditional Judaism. . . . It is our desire to avoid the use of any decoration which would offend the sensibilities of the most Orthodox. . . ." Upon receiving Ginzberg's reply (unfortunately no longer extant), he stated, "We shall act in strictest accord with it in the construction and decoration of the new Synagogue of Emanu-El congregation."

These are some of the sentiments held by early Seminary leaders and maintained by their successors, inspiring them to build a citadel of scholarship supported by an outstanding library and an expanding Conservative movement. Over the years, many hundreds of Seminary graduates have been serving with distinction in congregations, schools, and academic institutions in America, Israel, and other parts of the world. The historical approach to Judaism has been their guide in

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the past and will steer their course in the future. . . .

HERMAN DICKER
Jewish Theological Seminary of America
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Howard Singer is distressed that "sharp criticism," as in my published review of the new Conservative prayerbook, *Siddur Sim Shalom*, has replaced the "carefully nurtured habit of courtesy" that used to be the rule among Conservative rabbis. But he should not really be surprised. He describes Conservative Judaism as a coalition of, on the one hand, liberal Orthodox or halakhically-committed people who believe that modernity need not be threatening and, on the other hand, traditional Reform types who are liberal Jews wishing to maintain ethnic Jewish folkways. These two groups communicated with collegiality so long as the survival of one group required the support of the other. As a consequence, loyalty to buildings of wood and stone was more critical than ideological purity, and neither trend pressed its agenda to the point that would compromise the conscience of colleagues.

For habits of courtesy to be "carefully nurtured," however, courtesy must be reciprocal. During the last decade . . . traditionalists at the Jewish Theological Seminary and in the Rabbinical Assembly fell under siege . . . as curricular and ritual changes were pressed in and outside the Seminary that made it increasingly difficult for traditionalists to be recognizable as Conservative Jews or rabbis. Although Conservative Jewish leaders like to speak about "pluralism," the egalitarian issue was too crucial to the mission of those in power to be submitted to review or to restraint.

Thus, the recently published *Siddur Sim Shalom* treats ritual without consideration of gender as a dogma. It must be noted that this prayerbook was not subject to any review outside of its small committee, even though at least one request for review was made by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. In the days when the "habit of courtesy" was maintained in the Conservative rabbinic community, the Silverman *Sabbath and Festival Prayerbook* (1946) was published as a compromise document. While traditional formulas were maintained, subtle alterations were made that reflected the "objections" of certain elements. In retrospect, the traditionalists unwittingly compromised their moral ground at that time, but the collegiality of that moment was a very compelling force. The new liturgy of *Sim Shalom* is not a compromise document; the "Center" and "Left" trends within Conservative Judaism are represented in its various alternative liturgies, but no authentically traditional version is offered in this prayerbook which claims to speak for a supposedly pluralist denomination.

Similarly with the issue of the ordination of women as rabbis. . . . The "moral cause" of feminism was considered so compelling that an amendment to the constitution of the Rabbinical Assembly was framed and passed so that women rabbis could be accepted into its ranks. Under the old rules, the traditionalists possessed enough support to veto women rabbis, but this matter of principle required the overriding of the traditionalist bloc. The Rabbinical Assembly's executive supported the amendment without recorded dissent, although fully 30 percent of the movement opposed its passage. How courteous and how civil is a pluralist organization that refuses to represent the opinions or respect the rights of unpopular minorities within its ranks? . . .

For the Conservative egalitarians, gender equality is, in the words of the present chancellor, Ismar Schorsch, a "moral imperative." He has also seen fit to frame "the full participation of women, including [in] the rabbinate," as a Conservative dogma. Consequently, although it is legitimate to record both minority and majority opinions when dealing with insignificant details, the "moral imperative" of blurring gender distinctions has become so compelling to the emerging Conservative self-definition that on this matter the "carefully nurtured habit of courtesy" has had to be suspended. Those traditionalists who oppose the "moral imperative" are, in this view, so ethically benighted that their positions need not be taken into consideration. As one leading feminist explained, "the equality of women is so fundamental that if you don't accept it, you don't belong in our community. In the same way, I don't want to be in a community of anti-Semites."

In retrospect, the late Mordecai M. Kaplan was correct when he claimed that Conservative Judaism was a coalition rather than a movement. Now in search of self-definition, Conservative Judaism has adopted the orthodoxy of egalitarianism as a means of rejecting traditional Jewish law in general and increasing its claim on the nostalgic, nonobservant shrinking center of American Judaism. But the only definition its leaders can offer is a vapid non-Reform and non-Orthodoxy. Were its leaders intellectually or ethically sophisticated, they would realize that feminism has become its fundamentalism. . . .

Given Mr. Singer's accurate and apt description, Conservative Judaism conforms neither to the traditional Jewish canons of religion nor to the phenomenological definitions of religion that are accepted by secular sociologists. Through Conservative default, Orthodoxy has become the only traditional game in town.

Ironically, it is the Conservative traditionalist who was willing to compromise . . ., while the liberal was being true to his/her principles. For Conservative Judaism, egalitarianism has become a new orthodoxy, and orthodoxies are not known to exhibit the "carefully nurtured habit of courtesy" that Mr. Singer remembers with fondness. The believing and practicing traditional Jews within Conservative Judaism would do well to look elsewhere for their community. . . .

[Rabbi] ALAN J. YUTER
Congregation Ohr Yisrael
Spring Valley, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Howard Singer's brief history of Conservative Judaism is in some respects accurate, but its ironic and condescending tone leaves a bitter aftertaste. In analyzing the motives of the important parties in the development of Conservative Judaism, he consistently singles out those motives that are questionable or insincere.

For example: "The liturgical forms of Conservative Judaism were a reaction to embarrassment." They were, in fact, a reaction to that and to much more. They were an expression of a new vision of the sacred, a vision of dignity and majesty different from the dark and *heimische* sacredness of Eastern European Jewry; they were also the reaction to the new reality of a laity unfamiliar with the Hebrew liturgy.

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Again: in Conservative doctrine, Mr. Singer tells us, "the Bible becomes the word of man, not God"; "inspiration" (a middle option mentioned in a remark by Rabbi Max Arzt that Mr. Singer quotes) is "a nebulous term [that] . . . softens the impact" of that realization. Mr. Singer ignores the possibility that the Bible may be both man's word and God's; he ignores the logical and theological weight that a man like Arzt puts behind a position such as inspiration: not a nebulous term, not an exercise in self-deceit, but a subtle religious concept.

A third example: Conservative rabbis in the 1960's, says Mr. Singer, "took to addressing the political issues of the day," not, as one might suppose, because they were committed to certain political stances, but rather because such activities "seemed to offer an opportunity to reassert their role as leaders."

One could multiply examples, but the point is clear. Mr. Singer fails to ascribe to Conservative Judaism any theological insight, any religious experience, any sincere political or religious commitment. His Conservative Judaism is one with no content; it is not surprising, then, that he finds it in disarray.

JOSEPH DAVIS
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

According to Howard Singer, Conservative Judaism is the largest and most successful Jewish religious group in America. He quotes Rabbi Max Arzt to the effect that " 'Conservative Judaism aims to combine . . . piety with intellectual openness, a deep commitment to Jewish living with a critical understanding of the past. . . .' " I would like to know why those Jews who conform to Rabbi Arzt's idea of Conservative Judaism keep themselves so well hidden.

I work in a district office of the New York City Board of Education, in which there are over a hundred teachers and supervisors, about half of whom are Jewish. . . . In our office there are only a handful of us who observe the dietary laws, and that group is Orthodox. The situation in our school district is not unique. I am a past president of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Teachers of the New York City Public Schools, and in speaking to my colleagues I have learned that in virtually every public school in New York—1,000 in all—the only Jewish teachers who keep kosher and observe all the holidays are, with rare exceptions, the Orthodox. Where are the 1.2 million Conservative Jews keeping themselves? Do they all work in professions other than teaching? If so, where? Where are all those Conservative Jews who are loyal to Jewish tradition, observe *kashrut*, and keep the Sabbath? The breed of conservative Jew described by Mr. Singer . . . is actually so rare that during my lifetime I have met only one person who possibly fits his description.

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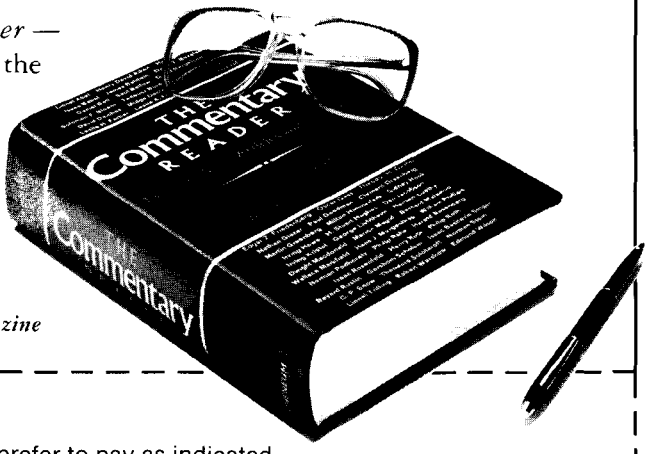

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In his article, Mr. Singer admits that much of Conservative principle never rubbed off on its laymen. In fact, even the new chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Ismar Schorsch, agrees that "the Seminary's zeal for observance has not spread to most persons who identify as Conservative Jews." . . . It would be interesting to discover why the message of piety has not been transmitted to the laymen. One of two possibilities presents itself. Either Conservative rabbis are terrible teachers or, the more plausible explanation, Conservative rabbis themselves are not sure what their message is. In any case, Conservative Judaism, in spite of its 800 synagogues, is a lot less successful than its proponents would like us to think. It is also clear that it is not the Conservatives who can guarantee Jewish survival.

ABRAHAM FRANK
Brooklyn, New York

HOWARD SINGER writes:

Rabbi Chinitz agrees with my analysis of Conservatism, but asks whether it might not apply to Reform and Orthodoxy as well. To use his metaphor, no, I do not think all three groups are in the same boat. They are in three separate boats, each leaking for a different reason.

Herman Dicker contradicts nothing in my article, but gives the impression that I should have written it in the same reverential tone he adopts in his letter.

I am grateful to Rabbi Yuter for writing to confirm my impression of serious tensions within the Conservative movement.

Joseph Davis finds the tone of my article "ironic and condescending." He writes that the Bible may be *both* man's word and God's (and not either alone), and calls this a "subtle religious concept" which I did not consider. Unfortunately, such subtlety completely removes a subject from rational discussion. I suspect that any deviation from the self-congratulatory tone deemed appropriate in a centennial year might appear ironic and condescending to Mr. Davis. He also says that "it is not surprising" that I find the Conservative movement "in disarray." I assume he thinks it inappropriate to describe the Conservative movement in this way; if so, he may want to change his mind after reading Rabbi Yuter's letter.

Abraham Frank's animus against Conservative Judaism apparently interferes with his reading comprehension. I remind him that only the wicked flee when no man pursueth. Let him reread my article and lower his voice.

The Spanish Civil War

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his poignant article, "For Whom the Bell Tolled" [December 1986], Jeffrey Hart discusses one of the most traumatic political and intellectual experiences of this century. The Spanish Civil War belongs to the sacred relics of the Left, an allegedly magnificent adventure in which the forces of good and evil waged an apocalyptic and tragic war. A tireless Communist school of falsification, rooted in unrepentant Stalinist myth-making, has portrayed Francisco Franco as the personification of the basest drives, whereas his opponents . . . are still venerated as archangels of justice. . . .

Certainly, as Mr. Hart notes, there were clear-minded intellectuals who refused to succumb to the prevailing leftist hagiography. Not only George Orwell, but also Arthur Koestler and Manès Sperber were among those who lost their illusions about Stalinism and left-wing radicalism as a result of the Spanish drama. . . .

The problem with people like Alfred Kazin, who stick to their youthful romantic dreams of Spain, is that they refuse to contemplate the evidence that the Republican cause was cynically appropriated and manipulated by Stalin's agents. It was the Communist police, under strict Soviet control, who destroyed the libertarian utopia in Catalonia. One should also consider that the horrendous techniques of what later came to be known as "people's democracy" were first tried out in Spain. Among the leaders of the International Brigades were people who would later make successful careers in Soviet-occupied countries of Eastern Europe. I mention only one: Ernö Gerö, Rakosi's second-in-command during the worst Stalinist excesses in postwar Hungary. Gerö was instrumental in the extermination of the POUM leadership in Barcelona during the civil war, a typical NKVD misdeed reproducing notorious Stalinist patterns. It should also be noted that the Spanish Civil War coincided with the heightening of the witchhunt that was to culminate in the bloodshed of the Great Purge.

Both my parents belonged to that duped generation. My mother was a student at the Bucharest medical school when she went to Spain, in 1937, to work in the International Hospital. My father was twenty-four when he lost his right arm during the battle of the Ebro. The history of the Spanish Civil War is therefore the history of my family, and I cannot be dispassionate about more or less sophisticated attempts to whitewash Stalinist policy toward that country. I was told by former *Interbrigadistas* about Polish and German volunteers in the International Brigades who were recalled to Moscow only to vanish into the frozen night of the Gulag.

Nothing was simple during the Spanish Civil War. There were enduring passions and obsessions that motivated fighters on both sides. One thing can be said, however, with bitter certainty: had the Republican side won, Spain would have become the first Stalinized country in Europe. Such an outcome would have been the logical consequence of the Communist accumulation of power over the main institutions of the Republic, particularly the political police and the army.

It may be fine for those still nostalgic for the Spanish Civil War to ruminate on their pathetic souvenirs, but they should also be reminded of the fate of many former "Volunteers for Freedom" (as the members of the International Brigades were called by Willi Münzenberg's Communist propaganda machine) in the countries behind the Iron Curtain after War War II. They become targets of the ignominious anti-cosmopolitan campaign, were expelled from the Communist party, and banished to the periphery of political life. . . . Laszlo Rajk, who fought with the International Brigades, was hanged in Budapest after a monstrous show trial in 1949. He was accused of espionage and conspiracy, and the roots of his treacherous behavior were tracked down to the time he had spent in Spain. Similar judicial farces were organized in other Communist countries. . . . Arthur London, the author of *The Confession* and Eugen Loebl's co-defendant in the anti-Semitic Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia in 1952,

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was also a survivor of the International Brigades. . . . In Eastern Europe, in those bewildering and anguishing years of Stalinist debauchery, many former members of the International Brigades . . . become victims of the very system they had wanted to impose on the Spanish people, a terrorist mechanism subordinated to the vagaries of a paranoid dictator. Ironically, among their torturers were fellow Communists, including former comrades from Spain.

Pointing to the ambiguity of the Republican cause does not mean exonerating the Falange and its atrocities. But we have to be accurate, and it would be absurd to maintain that Franco was nothing but a power-hungry fascist tyrant. . . .

As for those who were misled by Stalinist rhetoric and identified the Spanish Republican cause with the future of mankind, five decades of Soviet dictatorship and expansionism should have been more than instructive. They should by now have come to terms with their own past and be willing to admit that their lyrical illusions have long since proved false. Anti-fascism had catapulted them directly into Stalin's camp, where they wanted to see the only source of hope in those dark times. Their choice was abysmally wrong. . . . It is therefore distressing that even today there are intellectuals ready to endorse the nauseating jargon of Stalin's fraudulent internationalism.

The persecution of former combatants of the International Brigades in East and Central European Communist countries was not an *accident de parcours*; it was, rather, the blunt avowal of the reality of Communist politics, that endless and distressing story of Cains and Abels ready to kill and to die in the name of the radiant future.

VLADIMIR TISMANEANU
Foreign Policy Research Institute
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The MLA

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Stephen H. Balch and Herbert I. London's superb report on the grotesque, self-righteous political posturings of left-wing academics ["The Tenured Left," October 1986] and André Ryerson's letter in the February issue of COMMENTARY detailing the machinations of the Peace and World Security Studies program (PAWSS) at Amherst, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, and Hampshire Colleges and the University of Massachusetts should provide ample evidence to anyone seeking to gauge the political climate of the American university campus.

But if further documentation is wanted, I should like to draw your readers' attention to a resolution recently passed by the Delegate Assembly of the Modern Language Association (MLA) of America, and submitted to the MLA's membership for approval or rejection by ballot. The MLA is the largest and most influential professional organization of teachers of modern languages and literatures, and hence its membership constitutes a substantial percentage of the faculty of many American colleges and universities. The resolution its members are being asked to consider reads as follows:

> *Rationale:* When a government persistently follows a cruel and undemocratic course of action, when it does so behind a screen of secrecy and lies, and when it violates even the meager restraints it has imposed upon itself, scholars and teachers have a special responsibility to protest. That responsibility follows from our privileges: the time and resources for inquiry, a platform outside official bureaucracies, and a tradition of freely critical thought. That the government of the U.S. is pursuing in Central America a murderous course of action, to which the people of the U.S. have not consented, has become appallingly evident in recent weeks. This is a time for the membership of the MLA to speak as citizens and intellectuals, not just as specialists.
>
> *Resolved:* The Modern Language Association of America condemns our government's unjust and frequently illegal assaults on the people and government of Nicaragua. *We urge our colleagues in all fields to speak, educate, and act against these policies and against the deceptions that accompany them.* [Emphasis added]

I need hardly point out the strident, reflexive anti-Americanism of such an inflammatory rhetorical effort, or the undercurrent of elitism (a fine irony, indeed!) in the assertion that "the people of the U.S. have not consented" to the Reagan administration's efforts at containing Marxist expansionism in the region: what fraction of the American population may the MLA fairly be taken to represent?

What is worthy of note, however, is the final sentence of the resolution. It suggests an appalling myopia on the part of its authors, a confusion of the ideals of teaching and free inquiry with blatant political indoctrination. In fact, from one perspective such a polemical resolution, if passed and implemented by such a widely respected professional educational organization (and my experience with my academic colleagues indicates that ratification of the resolution is quite possibly a foregone conclusion), may well be more insidiously effective than initiatives, like the PAWSS program, that are limited to a few institutions. After all, as such things go, a pervasive, creeping cancer causes greater damage than an identifiable, localized infection. . . .

MICHAEL J. NETH
New York City

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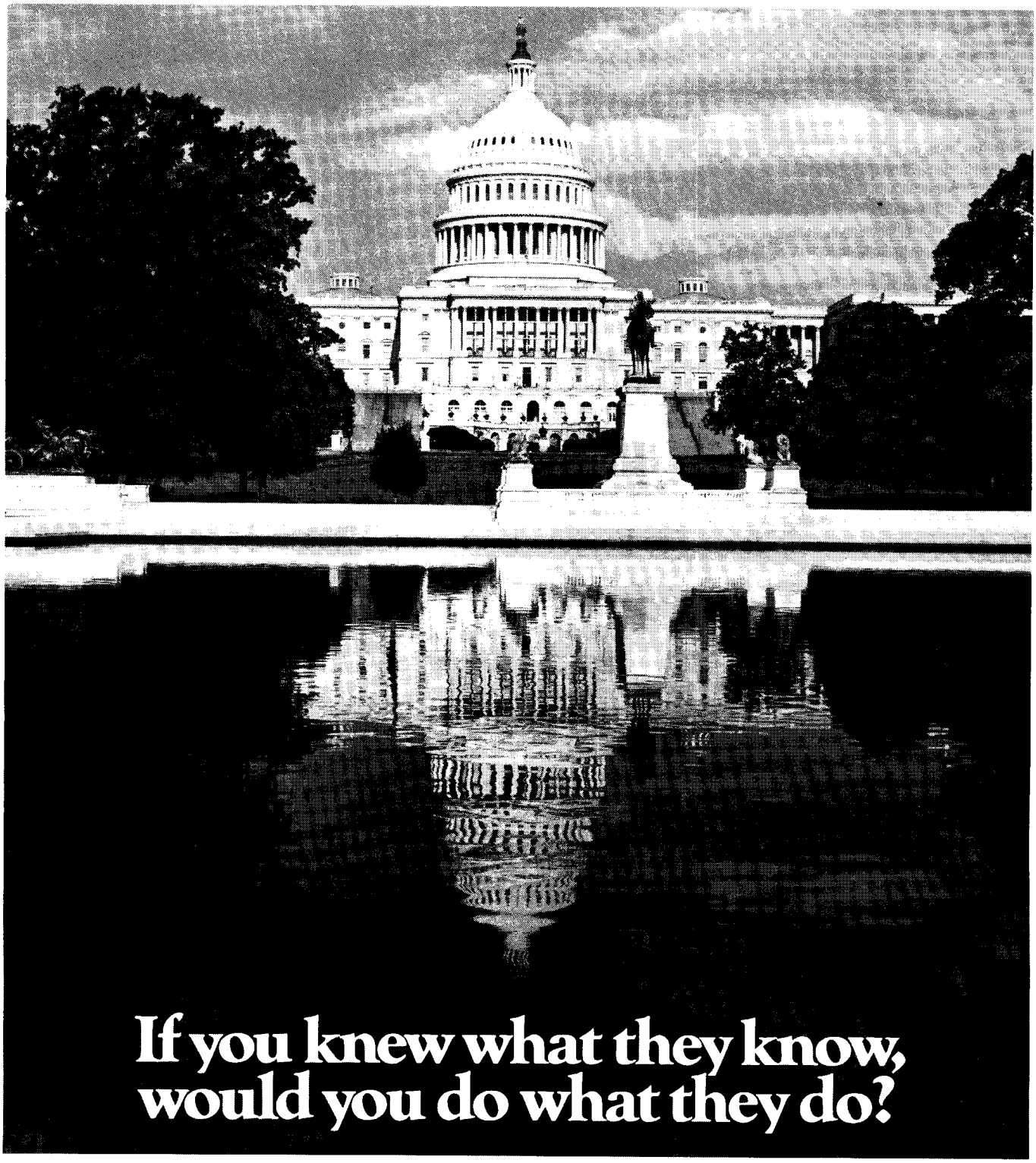

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The Guns of Watergate

Leonard Garment

THE headline on the cover of *Newsweek* not long ago boldly announced, "Nixon's Back." The story inside the magazine featured a photo of the former President engaged in a warm and smiling chat with Katharine Graham at the American Newspaper Publishers convention. The Graham family, of course, publishes the Washington *Post*, which did as much as any institution to bring Nixon down in 1974. The family also publishes *Newsweek*, the magazine that officially announced his return to political respectability. So much for Richard Nixon as a figure of irredeemable evil.

As for the Watergate crisis, there are very few people in Washington today, let alone in the country as a whole, who can explain just what it was all about. A recent New York *Times* poll revealed that Iran is now considered a more serious scandal than Watergate—which is a reflection of the fading of Watergate, I suggest, as much as of the force of public reaction to the Iran-*contra* revelations.

Nevertheless, even if the offenses involved were the type that pass quickly from public consciousness, Watergate can still tell us two sorts of things about political evil. First, some of the Watergate crimes were indeed political evils and deserve to be examined as such. Second, Watergate marked the beginning of an unprecedented attempt to root out evil and wrongdoing from American politics and to promote virtue and rectitude in the country's public life.

I learned much of what I know about Richard Nixon and Watergate from my years as first his law partner and then a member of his White House staff. When the Watergate ordeal finally came to an end in 1974, we who survived without becoming casualties limped away to our separate courses of personal and professional convalescence.

In the years since then, we have been relatively silent. For one thing, those who continued to feel admiration and affection for the former President, as I do, had a big task to perform in assessing Watergate, Nixon, and their meaning for American politics. Also, even those who visit with Mr. Nixon only occasionally cannot help knowing how deeply he feels about the remnants of privacy left to him and how much he loathes the usually superficial analyses that have abounded of his personal and psychological role in the Watergate crisis.

But now it has become essential to consider Watergate once again. A decade after the event, we can see that it has had enormous consequences for the way in which we conduct almost the whole of our national political affairs. We can also see that those consequences have not all been good ones.

THE two years of Watergate, from June 1972 until August 1974, constituted a high and seemingly endless public drama. It was played out in the press and on daily television, with the public invited to participate in the identification, trial, and punishment of the wrongdoers. Moreover, it was a tantalizing political mystery, unfolding piece by piece. How could Richard Nixon, one of the shrewdest politicians in American history, an ironhard survivor of numerous crises, the architect of the greatest of all presidential comebacks, make such fundamental political errors? Why did he fail to cut his losses immediately after June 17, 1972, the day of the Watergate break-in? Why did he keep his damning tapes? How did he let himself get drawn into a criminal cover-up? Why was his Watergate defense marked by mistake after mistake? Who was Deep Throat?

Rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, by the way, I was *not* Deep Throat. If there were a Deep Throat it would have to have been someone very close to John Dean who had the incriminating information before anyone else. However, I doubt that there was any such single source. No secret of that kind could last this long in Washington, not least because Mr. Throat would stand to make millions if his name were revealed. My theory is that when Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were writing their first Watergate book, their draft needed an organizing device. Hence Deep Throat became Watergate's Greek chorus.

The mysteries grew more and more complex. It

LEONARD GARMENT, here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is a lawyer practicing in Washington, D.C. with the firm of Dickstein, Shapiro, and Morin. The present article is based on a lecture given last January at the John M. Olin Center for Inquiry into the Theory and Practice of Democracy at the University of Chicago.

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got so that no one could begin to understand the story without detailed command of the Byzantine comings and goings of scores of characters like Caulfield, Hunt, McCord, Martinez, Segretti, Colson, and Ulasewicz. The crisis spawned a small library of books, with more on the way, each of which purports to add the crucial missing piece of the Watergate puzzle and each of which claws at essentially the same patch of ground.

Yet what was interesting and important about Watergate was not really very complicated. As usual, the purloined letter lay right in front of us.

Richard Nixon took office when the country's internal war was still raging over the issue of Vietnam. Significant sections of the political elite had come close to declaring the U.S. government illegitimate. Parts of the government itself were starting to resist directives from their political superiors because the bureaucracy did not want to make itself a target for the wrath and contempt—not to mention the bombs—of the antiwar movement.

The government was springing leaks—leaks to the press, leaks from the White House to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, leaks all over the place. And the government officials ordinarily in charge of plugging those leaks, particularly J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, did not want to do the job this time. So the White House started running its own ad-hoc counterintelligence operation.

This move by the administration had the obvious advantage of taking a difficult job away from a recalcitrant bureaucracy. It also had a characteristic disadvantage. When a function like this is assigned to irregulars, working outside established procedures, the price is a loss of the bureaucracy's expertise, its people, and its developed knowledge of where to draw the lines. (The same thing has happened, of course, in the Iran-*contra* affair.)

Oscar Wilde once observed that the trouble with practicing a vice is not so much the noxiousness of the vice itself as the low character of the people you have to associate with. The trouble with a closely held operation like the one the Nixon administration launched is that it makes you dependent on the sorts of people who are highly likely to get you into trouble.

This trouble came in the manner that might easily have been predicted. Even after all this time it is not clear exactly who ordered the Watergate break-in. It could have been one low-level campaign official or any one of a half-dozen very senior White House and campaign people, each acting for reasons and under pressures unknown to the others. But the closely held nature of the entire counterintelligence operation clearly made it easier to cross the line from quasi-national-security activities to purely political ones like Watergate. And then, of course, during the break-in of June 17, 1972, big mistakes were made, and the Watergate burglars were caught.

Quickly came the awful realization of earlier White House misdeeds, particularly the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, in 1971, that would be revealed if the burglars' personal connections were exposed to public light and followed to their furthest tendrils. There thus ensued the famous cover-up, which provided the bulk of the public titillation during the next two years. The rest, as we say today, was journalism.

RUNNING through the Watergate literature since that time have been two major theories of the event.

First there are the Richard Nixon theories. They begin in Nixon's boyhood, describing the early emotional impoverishment that produced an adult character based on resentment. These theories point to what they say was Nixon's early decision to found a political career on "red-baiting," culminating in his unrelenting pursuit of Alger Hiss. They describe the emotional humiliations Nixon was willing to endure in order to stay alive politically despite his basic gracelessness. Finally in these models comes the moment when Nixon, in his fully developed paranoia, assumes the Presidency and proceeds to marshal its resources—Constitution or no—in order to wreak revenge on his enemies.

It has always seemed to me that theories like these overreach considerably. Certainly Richard Nixon is a complicated character. It is true that during most of his career he displayed no natural gift for the graceful or resonant political gesture. He relied instead on his high intelligence and his extraordinary capacity for calculation. But in a situation like Watergate all the calculation in the world could not take the place of a good instinct pointing the correct way out of the swamp.

In 1972 and 1973 Nixon created the worst possible psychological circumstances in which to wage the biggest fight of his life. In November 1972, with the Watergate cancer starting to metastasize, he fired much of his personal administration, put the bureaucracy on notice that he meant to eliminate its autonomy, and launched a war with Congress to curtail its interference in his plan to reduce and decentralize the federal government. He also made no effort to conceal his antagonism and distrust for the official intelligence community. To observe these events is to understand why many people are driven to a psychological explanation. It seems as if Nixon either forgot the existence of Watergate or decided at some level of deliberateness to raise the stakes and take on the whole world of Washington in his last and greatest crisis.

Even after Watergate, it should be noted, the fascination of Nixon's personality remains. The pronouncements of his political death in 1974 turned out once again to be premature. Nixon's electoral career was ended, but along with it went

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the incubus of anger that was the self-defeating force in his life. His astonishing final, final comeback seems to be a determined effort to reconcile the conflict and repair the damage of a long political life, and in this he seems to be succeeding. It is hard to find anyone who wants to kick Richard Nixon around any more.

But it is useless to take these psychological explanations too far. Almost all modern American Presidents have been involved in battles royal with Congress and the bureaucracy. They have been making use of electronic and other forms of eavesdropping on their opponents at least since the early 1960's. They have done so from a combination of national-security considerations, partisan politics, and plain old prurient interest, in approximately equal proportions. Clearly, there is a structural reason why Presidents have kept resorting to this type of spying. Personality alone cannot explain it.

Nor can the psychological theories explain why Nixon ran the Watergate cover-up in the doomed way he did. The proponents of these theories usually say that if Nixon had quickly gone to the American people, laid the whole thing out, and admitted his mistakes, he would surely have been forgiven. They also say that if he had been willing at the start to fire his Attorney General and aides like John Ehrlichman, Bob Haldeman, and Charles Colson he would not have ended up destroying himself in the process of defending them. They find his failure to do so inexplicable and further evidence of some deep pathology at work.

Each of these retrospective judgments may contain some elements of truth. But before we get too smug about our psychological perspicacity, we should remember that the buggings and break-ins whose revelations Nixon was forced to contemplate were not exactly the romantic stuff of the Bay of Pigs bungle that John F. Kennedy apologized for so quickly and winningly. Exposing such things would not self-evidently have worked for Nixon as Kennedy's apology did for him.

We should also remember that the Nixon aides involved in Watergate were precisely those in whom he placed his political trust. Moreover, firing a high-level staffer in the days of Watergate meant cutting him loose to face a grand jury and the virtual certainty of a long jail term. This was considerably rougher than merely banishing him back to his law firm, investment house, or public-relations company. Under Watergate circumstances, some of the fired aides would surely fight back. This meant they might reveal not-too-pleasant things about Nixon's White House. There was also an election coming up, and no matter how dim George McGovern's prospects appeared in June, there was no way of knowing where a confession and apology might lead. Nixon most emphatically did not want this idiotic Watergate venture to jeopardize his expected big win or perhaps his winning at all. He felt, with justification, that he had been cheated out of a victory over Kennedy in 1960, and he came horrifyingly close to losing a "sure thing" in 1968.

In short, there was nothing necessarily pathological or paranoid in Nixon's reluctance to let everything and everyone go.

IN THE same way, there is no particular mystery to the question of why Nixon kept his ultimately damning Oval Office tapes. Keeping them turned out, of course, to be a calamity. But in the early days of Watergate Nixon was still treating it as not a legal but a political problem. He therefore consulted on the subject of the tapes not with his lawyers but with his most trusted political aide, Bob Haldeman. If Nixon had consulted lawyers early in 1973, they might have told him that the tapes, damning or innocent, should not be sitting around the White House waiting to become part of any future investigations. But Haldeman—intelligent, loyal to Nixon, and with a strong sense of politics—advised the President to keep the tapes. Added to this advice was Nixon's confidence that the tapes were securely protected by executive privilege. Further, there were the extremely cumbersome logistics of destroying a large library of old-fashioned tape reels.

For all these reasons Nixon kept the tapes. Then the Senate demanded them, and it became too late to destroy them, for destruction would have been a possible obstruction of justice, an act of contempt of Congress, and a potential trigger for impeachment. It may be, as the Watergate special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, wrote long after the event, that Nixon could have survived the public destruction of the tapes even after they were subpoenaed. But it was something Nixon decided not to do, and it was not an unreasonable decision at the time.

This business of the tapes is one example of a more general point: Nixon's legal strategy during Watergate was full of mistakes in no small part because he treated his lawyers not as lawyers but as staffers carrying out a political defense. He thought such a defense would work. He hoped to blur the issues of Watergate by using his presidential prerogatives and his special access to the country. He was also counting on most people's inherent unwillingness to lose their national leader. He hoped he could outlast his adversaries and hold enough strength in Congress to defeat an impeachment vote. Since he gave his lawyers little knowledge of the facts, including his not-so-singular financial and tax difficulties, they could not devise a coherent legal strategy and had no ability to anticipate and avoid problems.

In other words, Nixon's lawyers had no way of defusing the bombs lying around the landscape, and these bombs proceeded to explode one after the other, providing daily grist for the media and

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Nixon's congressional adversaries. The subsequent publicity and public denunciations inexorably undermined Nixon's political support. At the end, in August 1974, most of the White House staff was demoralized, weary, and worried. Some key members were looking for places in an incoming Ford administration and only a handful of family and bone-deep loyalists supported a continuation of the struggle. With midterm elections only a few months off, and the polls showing disaster for the Republicans if Nixon were still in office then, his support in Congress vanished. Impeachment was certain and resignation unavoidable.

All this, it should be clear, was not so much the result of a clinically interesting personality as it was the product of a series of political events occurring in a very special context.

WHICH brings us to the second major theory of the Watergate literature—what might be called the "imperial Presidency" theory. The argument goes that once upon a time we had a weak Presidency, much as the Founding Fathers wanted it. But over the years, what with wars, big social programs, and general lust for power, the monster grew until it thought it could do almost anything. It was only at the last moment, with the fortuitous event of Watergate, that Congress and the American press pulled the country back from the brink.

This theory is a decade old, and today it looks very dated. The behavior of the press and Congress after Watergate hardly shows institutions that had been reduced to a state of frailty. Still, the "imperial Presidency" idea does point us in the right direction, because it calls our attention to the intense frustration Presidents feel when they run into domestic political opposition during wartime.

Wartime opposition is virulent opposition because the dispute is always over the lives of American soldiers. This bitterness is compounded because people who think their country is engaged in a wrongful war tend almost irresistibly to start thinking that their country and its values are fundamentally flawed or even evil. Vietnam was a poisonous episode of this kind. And while it is reprehensible, it is no surprise that Richard Nixon started thinking that wiretaps and other countermeasures were necessary. There were sandbags in the corridors of the Old Executive Office Building during the violent May Day demonstrations in 1971, and armed troops standing guard and sleeping in the halls.

This intensity and virulence meant that when Nixon's opponents saw the administration caught in the act of lawbreaking and cover-up, they descended on the case with a fire born of years of antiwar protests and more years of hatred and contempt for Richard Nixon and his values.

Some of the players in Watergate were complete partisans from the very beginning, and made no bones about what they wanted to do to Richard Nixon. Tip O'Neill was of this sort, and his feelings were portrayed openly and vividly by one of the most colorful of the Watergate books, Jimmy Breslin's *How the Good Guys Finally Won*. Fair enough: O'Neill was an honest political opponent. But what about the large team of lawyers and investigators hired by the House of Representatives to determine whether Richard Nixon should be impeached?

The impeachment inquiry was represented to the Congress and the country as a meticulously objective exercise in political due process. On January 31, 1974, John Doar, majority counsel for the investigation, began the proceedings by formally assuring the House Judiciary Committee that "every [Doar] staff member was questioned whether or not they had taken a position on impeachment and if they had, other than that there should be an inquiry, then they were not considered for the job." Doar also repeatedly affirmed that he and his staff were openminded about the outcome of their inquiry.

Yet there is evidence that raises some doubt about these professions of neutrality. In an article published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1976, Renata Adler explained that she had been a member of a private staff she described as Doar's "ad-hoc irregulars." These consisted of seven people, five of them old friends of Doar's, who did what Miss Adler called "the real work" of the House inquiry, such as drafting briefs and arguments for impeachment and preparing public statements for Doar and various Congressmen. From the first minute, there "never was any doubt among Doar and this small group," wrote Miss Adler, that "unless there was overwhelming evidence of Nixon's innocence . . . the object of the process was that the President must be impeached and removed from office."

Even more, Miss Adler says that months before he became special counsel to the House inquiry, Doar had been the second "non-radical person" she knew calling for Nixon's impeachment. Doar customarily described his assignment to his ad-hoc irregulars as "war," and "the Cause." He was "certain from the start," Miss Adler puts it, "that the President must be, under conditions of exemplary fairness, removed from office." But, writes Miss Adler approvingly, such sentiments could not be disclosed until congressional support for Nixon had eroded enough to permit Doar to administer the *coup de grâce*.

Here is another note about the spirit of the impeachment inquiry. According to Miss Adler, Doar expected that Nixon's lawyers would argue, as part of their defense, that Presidents from George Washington onward had committed abuses of power without being removed from office. Doar therefore retained C. Vann Woodward, the eminent Yale historian, to supervise the prep-

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aration of a counterargument. Because of Nixon's resignation, the argument Doar expected from the Nixon team was never made. Professor Woodward's study survives, however, as a sad example of academic expertise marshaled for political purposes. It is a compendium of presidential wrongdoing that manages to pass over a large number of established abuses of power, including Attorney General Robert Kennedy's authorization of the FBI's wiretapping of Martin Luther King's hotel rooms and of newsmen and others. It omits altogether Lyndon Johnson's use of the odious King materials, his taping of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic party during the 1964 Democratic convention, and his spying on Richard Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign for alleged national-security purposes.

What is most extraordinary about Miss Adler's pieces of Watergate information is that after her *Atlantic Monthly* article appeared in 1976, her revelations were never, to my knowledge, mentioned anywhere again by anyone. How could this be? How could the national media, alert to every Watergate detail, however small and speculative, miss this dramatic inside story?

I believe that the longstanding ideological hatred of Nixon, dating from his senatorial campaign in 1948 against Helen Gahagan Douglas and even more from the Hiss case, gathering steam as a result of Vietnam, pervading Watergate and persisting afterward, was one large reason for the almost universal lack of interest in anything that might introduce a troubling ambiguity into the historical record or undermine the claims of purity made for the methods by which the campaign against Nixon was prosecuted. Watergate was called a matter of high crimes and misdemeanors, but clearly its intensity came from its also being a barely veiled issue of the deepest political ideology.

It is now more than a decade since those days. The general climate in this country has changed, and most people have only the vaguest idea of what the early 1970's were like. But during Watergate some people discovered what a powerful tool criminal prosecution, or even the threat of criminal prosecution, could be against an opponent in power. Watergate was by no means the beginning of the investigative and prosecutorial styles in American politics. In some respects Woodward and Bernstein did no more than recapture the spirit of Lincoln Steffens and other muckraking journalists of an earlier day. But Watergate popularized the style, sharpened the techniques, made it politically and commercially profitable, and hugely increased the number of people in the business.

Moreover, in the wake of Watergate, Congress passed laws making it much easier to get information out of the government and requiring an unprecedented disclosure of personal data by high government officials. This meant that suddenly there was much richer and more promising earth for the congressional staffer or investigative reporter to dig into.

Given all this, it is not surprising that in the past thirteen years the politics of criminal or quasi-criminal scandal should have come almost to dominate public discussion at the national level. Some of the wrongdoing uncovered has been serious crime of the sort that would have been big news at any time in our history. The rest has been uniquely post-Watergate.

In 1976, well after Nixon's departure, we were still getting revelations of burglaries that the FBI had committed against left-wing political groups. The head of the FBI apologized to America. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, known as the Church Committee, then declared the need to take strong corrective action based on a long history of abuses by Presidents and their intelligence establishments in the conduct of covert foreign-policy operations, including attempted assassinations of foreign leaders. The Senate committee's chief answer to this problem was to set itself up on a permanent basis, so that Congress could keep closer watch over potential executive-branch miscreants.

As the Carter administration began, Congress passed a new and stricter ethics code, plus campaign-finance legislation that, it was thought at the time, would cut down the influence of big money in politics. Then President Carter's first Director of Management and Budget, Bert Lance, was forced to resign over alleged financial improprieties. He was later acquitted of all charges in a state-court trial. Carter's chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan, was charged by an accuser with having used cocaine on one occasion. The charges pursued him well after he had left the White House. His vindication was complete, but the legal expenses bankrupted him.

The pace quickened when the Reagan administration took office. Reagan's first National Security Adviser, Richard Allen, was forced to resign over reports that he had wrongfully accepted some small personal gifts. He was ultimately cleared of all charges, but too late to have the stain removed from his public career.

Then Reagan's Secretary of Labor Ray Donovan began his long bout with the prosecutors, which is still dragging on in a Bronx court some five years later, with Donovan a peripheral defendant. The next year Anne Burford, the controversial head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), left because of accusations of impropriety, though no charges were ever brought against her. She took with her Rita Lavelle, head of the EPA Superfund, who was convicted of obstructing the congressional inquiry into her affairs.

The nomination of Edwin Meese to be Attorney General was held up for nine months while Con-

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gress and an independent counsel investigated and cleared him of all charges of financial wrongdoing. Then Meese as Attorney General failed to get W. Bradford Reynolds confirmed as Associate Attorney General because people who disagreed with Reynolds about the proper interpretation of the Voting Rights Act contended that, when he was in a lower Justice Department post, he had not simply read the law wrong but actually violated what they said was the clear intent of Congress. The opponents then accused Reynolds of moral turpitude on the ground that he had not properly confessed to his misdeed during his confirmation hearings.

At the moment there are at least seven independent counsels carrying on investigations of high government officials, with others waiting in the wings. This is more than at any time since the office of independent counsel (formerly called special prosecutor) was established in the wake of Watergate.

I KNOW something about such investigations. I represented Attorney General Meese during his confirmation process in 1984. During the present Iran investigations I represent President Reagan's former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane. I have also gotten a fairly close view of a number of other recent political investigations.

The first thing to be said about them is that even, or rather especially, for an innocent person, these investigations are a nightmare. They consume a huge proportion of his time and severely diminish his ability to use the rest of his waking hours in any productive way. They are frightening and embarrassing to his family and friends. They can destroy him financially, and this prospect adds a great deal to his anxieties.

These proceedings have no fixed end-point. There is no closed universe of charges. At any time someone can come forward with a new allegation that must be included in the search.

Congressional and media investigators in these matters ask for legal-style clarity about lives that are filled with ambiguity. The investigators have before them years of personal and official records about which no sane person would have the slightest memory. They can find sinister meaning and lying in inconsistencies that are in truth just that —normal human incoherence, growing out of normal human psychological imperatives or innocent lapses of memory or the ordinary need to speak differently to different people.

Most working press people are decent professionals responding to the competitive pressures of the new-style journalism. Most men and women in Congress are also decent people. But there are some horrible elected and appointed apples in the congressional barrel. They make a career of grabbing the headlines via the mechanism of witness-stoning under the klieg lights. These people have their media collaborators, primed to pump out the personal slander, the unfounded rumor, the sly half-truth, and the charge made without a fair or timely chance to answer.

All of which is to say that public figures now have a very special vulnerability. Richard Nixon, in particular, knew a great deal about this. He understood the operation and language of politics with the intimacy of the hangman's understanding of the last moments of the condemned. Nothing could be concealed from him. He knew all the tics and maneuvers, all the corruptions and possibilities. On the night in 1966 when we celebrated the victories of the many candidates he had campaigned for in the midterm elections, he observed to me ironically that no man can hope to be a successful candidate and political leader unless he understands how to lie.

At the time that sounded shockingly cynical. Now, twenty-one years later, it seems to me an unarguable and almost commonplace proposition.

One of the strongest political epithets that can be hurled at a political adversary is to call him a "liar." This is not surprising, for ordinary people naturally hate lies and lying. Yet everyone has always known that politicians lie. Politicians in a democracy know that it is absurd to think they can win or hold office if they insist on telling the plain truth and telling it uniformly to every audience. To omit or blur facts, to parcel out different positions to different audiences, to dissemble gracefully—these are vital techniques for political success because an office-seeker or office-holder, in order to win and govern, must work unceasingly to accommodate a variety of sharply conflicting voter interests.

Of course there are lies and lies. It is not morally permissible for a national leader to tell the country a significant lie without a very good and serious reason. But the line between the permissible lies of legitimate politics and criminal lying is sometimes determined by extrinsic circumstances, the hostility of a crucial audience, the self-interest of an important witness, or pure accident.

Watergate ran the gamut from flagrant perjury to mere defensive dissembling, from prison sentences to verdicts that were mere media judgments. Do we know even now the motives of the various actors? Do we know who lied and who shaded, who forgot out of confusion or fear, who planned and who stumbled, who acted with a criminal *mens rea* and who out of simple, ordinary political calculation?

We do not know, nor is it clear we ever will. Precise judicial determinations rarely reflect life's confusions. A jury's finding of criminal responsibility may be legally just, yet fail completely to answer the historian's questions.

If all this confusion holds in the case of Watergate, it applies even more fully to everyday politics and everyday politicians. Any public official

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with the slightest introspectiveness, even if he is innocent, knows that his life is filled with ambiguities, untruths, and uncertainties of recall that would look like sure signs of guilt if exposed to hostile examination. No wonder, then, that the time of one of these investigations is, for the person being investigated, nothing less than a time of terror.

It might be argued that this is the price that people must be willing to pay if they want a public life, just as they must be willing to put up with low salaries and financial-disclosure forms. I do not think we can be so sanguine about the matter.

The debate still goes on in Washington about whether the government ethics laws of today actually keep able people out of government. Every so often some organization like the Office of Government Ethics does a survey of applicants and concludes there is no evidence of any such inhibiting effect. Yet I do not know anyone with experience in Washington over the past ten years who will deny that the current picture of public service as a series of trials by fire does indeed keep people away from the capital. Moreover, the prospect is more disagreeable to some kinds of people than to others. If we want the upper reaches of the bureaucracy and the country's high political posts filled with the very rich and with people who are quite happy to dispense with their material comfort and that of their families for the pursuit of power, there is no cause for worry about this situation. But if we think we need a somewhat different spirit animating the officials who rule the rest of us from Washington, we have excellent reason to be very uncomfortable with current practice. In addition, the system places a high premium on risk-averse people, largely preoccupied with covering their flanks. This poses its own substantial risks for a system of democratic governance.

Even apart from the feelings of the victims, the tendency toward prosecution or quasi-prosecution as an ordinary style of politics—toward what we might call a prosecutorial politics—has a very definite set of effects, some quite curious, on political practice.

First, ironically, the style can make public officials or nominees *less* rather than more vulnerable in some ways to their political opponents. To illustrate, note the irony that marks the history of the office of the independent counsel. The assumption behind its establishment after Watergate was that high officials were committing crimes and not getting caught and punished because the Justice Department, the agency that would normally prosecute them, worked for the President and could be ordered to keep its hands off. The solution was to set up a permanent special-prosecutor mechanism, elaborately insulated from the Justice Department. For each case, an investigating counsel would be appointed by the court rather than the executive branch, and the counsel's recommendations as to prosecution would not have to get Justice Department approval. (The name of the office was later changed to the Office of the Independent Counsel to lessen the *a priori* suggestion of wrongdoing.)

Since that act of creation, about a dozen independent counsels have been appointed. Only one investigation (in the case of Michael K. Deaver) has thus far resulted in a decision by the prosecutor to press for an indictment. Is that because the independent counsels are somehow being subverted by political considerations? No one has suggested that this is the case. Instead, it seems likely that these independent counsels, insulated from politics and applying strictly legal considerations, have concluded that the criminal cases were simply not there.

It follows that if the opponents of a public official or nominee base their attack on a charge that some crime has been committed, the attackers may be doing a tactically dangerous thing. If they object to a nominee on the ground that he takes bribes, and it turns out that according to the independent counsel the nominee does not take bribes, the critics lose their credibility and most likely their case, even though the nominee may be unqualified for other reasons. Thus while it is true that the Reagan administration has had its share of bad characters and incompetents, it is futile to address the problem by searching eagerly for a skeleton in every available closet.

This narrowing of the grounds for objection to a nominee or office-holder is one unintended consequence of the criminalization of our public affairs. Another such consequence is the growth of secrecy.

Part of the prosecutorial style in modern U.S. politics has been the call for more and more disclosure of information by officials and government agencies. This is of course no accident. The more information an investigator has before him, the greater chance he has of getting a clue to where criminality may lie. More broadly, the new prosecutors, and reformers in general, think of secrecy as the dark swamp in which improper influence is exercised. Sunlight is the great leveler. If a city hires its health inspectors according to their numerical scores on entrance examinations graded blind by government bureaucrats, it becomes quite difficult for the deputy mayor to get one of these jobs for his brother-in-law.

Maximum disclosure, however, has other effects as well. Elaborate disclosure requirements increase the number of regulations a federal official might be found guilty of violating. He may have gotten a perfectly legal loan from the Oshkosh Bank and Trust last year. But if he failed to disclose the transaction on the appropriate form, whether his omission was deliberate or not, he has provided material for at least one big newspaper headline

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and a session of televised congressional excoriation. And once an official has committed a secondary offense like this and has been thrown into panic by its public disclosure, it is likely that he will commit yet other defensive and suspicious-looking acts.

The most important and perverse net result of all these increased hazards is an increase in secrecy at high levels of American government. Back in the days of the Watergate disclosures, there was much laughter over the news that Nixon administration officials and the people they dealt with would sometimes meet to conduct their business across the street from the White House in Lafayette Park. But this was no joke. One high-level administration official who lived through those days now tells his protégés who go into government, "You must write every memo as if you were going to see it on the front page of the New York *Times*."

I do not know a federal official any more who will claim that he writes memos or letters containing what he believes to be the unvarnished truth. An official who did so today would be considered so foolish as to be unfit for public office. Instead, public papers are full of pieties that serve only to call attention to the fact that true motives are being concealed. One new technique is the creation of memoranda that are designed to present a fictitious and self-serving view of the author if disclosure and publication should be compelled.

Accordingly, important understandings in government and in public life are more and more often reached orally. Decisions are made on the telephone or during personal meetings—often meetings at places like parties and receptions, since a meeting in an official's office goes onto his agenda or into his chronological file and thus becomes available under the Freedom of Information Act.

This picture does not imply that public officials are running around in droves doing substantively scandalous things. It is simply that most of them have a deep yearning to escape the paperwork, the congressional committees, the public embarrassments, and the debilitating suspicion they might incur by putting things on the record.

The result of this mode of operation, I would argue, is that decisions have become less reasoned, less communicable to others and available for judgment by them, and less easy to hold officials accountable for.

Still, even with all the unintended consequences, to a large extent the new ethics rules and disclosure regulations do what they were intended to do. Public officials spend large amounts of energy complying with the rules, worrying about whether they have complied fully enough, consulting with counsel, and pacing the floor with anxiety, unfit for other work, whenever a newspaper reporter calls to announce that there appears to be some discrepancy in the official's latest annual report of his financial dealings. Departmental counsel in turn increasingly spend their time counseling caution rather than contributing to policy-making.

Now I know the arguments made by defenders of the new-style prosecutorial politics: that the excessive secrecy of White House operations, the overuse of executive privilege, and the primacy of law in sustaining the democratic faith of a heterogeneous polity combine to justify constant vigilance by the Congress and the media.

A reformer would say that when officials worry about possible scandal, it simply means that people are devoting more attention to the laudable goal of achieving probity in the public service. A less flattering interpretation would be that the officials now have less time to spend pursuing policy goals that the reformers do not agree with.

I am not suggesting that all the practitioners of this new political style deliberately use it as a veil for their ideological preferences. A generation has come out of the journalism schools and law schools having learned the new investigative ethic along with their first lessons in torts and headlines. They do not think they are doing anything partisan when they go poking around in those financial records. They believe they are acting without fear or favor. They insist—and the case of Geraldine Ferraro bears them out—that they will hold a liberal or left-wing public official accountable just as readily as they will a conservative.

But if we look at the objective results of their actions, we see that what they are doing is displacing the attention of public officials and the voting public in general. They are turning this attention from issues that have been placed on the agenda by elections and coalitions and citizens' groups and pointing it toward what has now become the great question of American politics: "What did you know and when did you know it?"

At its worst, in fact, this concentration on investigation and prosecution is profoundly anti-democratic. It is not anti-democratic, of course, to require that public officials obey the law. But the constant escalation of legal requirements and quasi-legal charges, and the vast energies directed to the whole project of ferreting out wrongdoing, is quite another matter. It is an attempt to save the supposedly ill-informed citizens of this country from the charlatans that they benightedly elect to public office and from the issues that the ignorant public keeps wanting to put on the national agenda. The *New Yorker*'s "Talk of the Town," of all places, recently described the country's new habit of undermining a President's legitimacy so that his defeated opponent—McGovern or Mondale or Carter—winds up achieving a kind of symbolic retroactive vindication.

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THE prosecutorial ethos has sunk roots so deep in our system, and so many people have developed a material stake in it, that the response to the recent Iran revelations was perhaps inevitable.

The administration provided the opening. Six years of unexpected success by President Reagan, years in which his mistakes did nothing to dent his popularity, made for a high state of tension among his congressional and media critics. When last November a Lebanese magazine exposed U.S.-authorized arms shipments to the Khomeini regime, the President responded with a fumbling explanatory speech and an even worse press conference. Then, as he exposed his vulnerability, we got the further disclosure that funds from the Iranian arms sales had been diverted to the Nicaraguan *contras*.

The reaction was a legal Agincourt, with arrows hurled at the administration from all directions. House and Senate committees opened hearings in such haste that they gave virtually no notice to witnesses. Daily press coverage grew massive. Editorial outrage was near-unanimous. An independent counsel was named. He quickly started assembling large staffs of investigators and prosecutors in New York and Washington, and suggested that his work would most likely last for at least eighteen months. Senate and House select committees were chosen and began their own intensive investigations to prepare for public hearings this spring.

And here is the worst of it: my bet is that more revelations are coming, and that some of them may well be as startling as anything we have heard so far. The stage is now set for a long-running prosecutorial and quasi-prosecutorial drama that will erode what is left of the administration's ability to govern.

The people in charge of all this digging will have to figure out which individuals acted during the Iran affair out of criminal, corrupt, venal motives, and which did not. This will not be so easy. But if the prosecutors attached to the independent counsel and the committee staffs are experienced and professional, they will know how to distinguish among significant crimes for which they find evidence, technical crimes, and what may look scandalous but is in fact from a courtroom prosecutor's point of view merely "junk." For the prosecutors to play it straight may also not be so easy. The public pressures from all sides will be enormous.

There is a more important question: even if criminal statutes like those governing mail and wire fraud or embezzlement of government property can be represented as applicable to the case, is it wise to apply them, in the absence of venality or recognizable criminal purpose, where violations were committed in a climate of authorization by the highest officials of the executive branch?

For most cases the answer is no. Undue attention to criminal possibilities in the Iran affair will only obscure the huge political problems that the case reveals. Talking constantly about lying and slippery slopes as the dragons to be slain will make people forget that the current crisis has followed upon a period of ever-expanding openness in government (which has itself fed the opposite tendency toward ever-expanding secrecy). Becoming mesmerized by the extreme example of wrongdoing will teach us the wrong lessons to take back to our everyday practice of politics.

As it happens, the Tower Commission report was not mesmerized in this way and could serve as a model of responsible inquiry. The Iran affair is, however, undoubtedly too fat and tempting a target for others to resist. So, despite protestations at the beginning of the crisis that we did not want another Watergate, the Watergate guns have been rolled into position. Another generation will get the taste of what it means to hunt the sweating human prey under the klieg lights. These newest prosecutors will, unless the country is improbably lucky, want to repeat the thrill of the game again and again.

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Liberty, Equality, Sexuality

Allan Bloom

CONTRARY to the popular prejudice that America is a nation of unintellectual and anti-intellectual people, where ideas are at best means to ends, this country is actually nothing but a great stage on which theories have been played out as tragedy and comedy. Our story is the majestic and triumphant march of two principles, the principles of freedom and equality, which give meaning to all that we have done or are doing. Everything that happens among us is a consequence of one or both of our principles—a triumph over some opposition to them, a discovery of a fresh meaning in them, a dispute about which of the two has primacy, and so forth.

Now we have arrived at one of the ultimate acts in our drama, the informing and the reforming of our most intimate private lives by our two principles. Sex and its consequences—love, marriage, and family—have finally become the theme of our national project. And perhaps nowhere is the drama being played out with greater poignancy than among the privileged young, the students at our better colleges and universities.

THE change in sexual relations, which now provide an unending challenge to human ingenuity, came over us in two successive waves in the last two decades. The first was the sexual revolution; the second, feminism. The sexual revolution marched under the banner of freedom; feminism under that of equality. Although they went arm in arm for a while, their differences eventually put them at odds with each other, as Tocqueville said freedom and equality would always be.

This is manifest in the squabble over pornography, which pits liberated sexual desire against feminist resentment about stereotyping. We are presented with the amusing spectacle of pornography, clad in armor borrowed from the heroic struggles for freedom of speech, and using Miltonic rhetoric, doing battle with feminism, newly draped in the robes of community morality, using arguments associated with conservatives who defend traditional sex roles, and also defying an authoritative tradition in which it was taboo to suggest any connection between what a person reads or sees and his sexual practices. In the background stand the liberals, wringing their hands in confusion because they wish to favor both sides and cannot.

The sexual revolution presented itself as a bold affirmation of the senses and of undeniable natural impulse against our puritanical heritage, society's conventions and repressions, bolstered by biblical myths of original sin. From the early 60's on, there was a gradual testing of the limits on sexual expression, and they soon melted away (where they had not already disappeared without anybody's having noticed). The disapproval of parents and teachers of youngsters' sleeping or living together was easily overcome. The moral inhibitions, the fear of disease, the risk of pregnancy, the family and social consequences of premarital sexual intercourse and the difficulty of finding places in which to have it—everything that stood in the way suddenly was no longer there. Students, particularly the girls, were no longer ashamed to give public evidence of sexual attraction or of its fulfillment. The kind of cohabitations that were dangerous in the 20's, and risqué or bohemian in the 30's and 40's, became as normal as (previously) membership in the Girl Scouts.

I say "particularly the girls" because young men were always supposed to be eager for immediate gratification, whereas young women, inspired by modesty, were supposed to resist it. It was, indeed, a modification or phasing out of female modesty, now defined as mere convention or habit, that made the new arrangements possible.

The immediate promise of the sexual revolution was, simply, happiness understood as the release, in a great continuous Bacchanalia, of energies that had been stored up over millennia during the dark night of repression. However, the lion roaring behind the door of the closet turned out, when that door was opened, to be a little domesticated cat. In fact, seen from a long historical perspective, the sexual revolution might be interpreted as the recognition that sexual passion is no longer dangerous in us, and that it is safer to give it free course than to risk rebellion by restraining it. I once asked a class how it could be that not too long ago parents would have said to wayward daughters, "Never darken our door

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again," whereas now they rarely protest when boyfriends sleep over in their homes. A very nice, very normal, young woman responded, "Because it's no big deal." That says it all. This passionlessness is the most striking effect, or revelation, of the sexual revolution, and it makes the younger generation more or less incomprehensible to its elders.

In all this, the sexual revolution was precisely what it said it was—a liberation. But some of the harshness of nature asserted itself beneath the shattered conventions: the young were more apt to profit from the revolution than the old, the beautiful than the ugly. Formerly, a veil of discretion had had the effect of making these raw and ill-distributed natural advantages less important in life and marriage. But now there was little attempt to apply egalitarian justice in these matters (along the lines, say, of the older Athenian women in Aristophanes' *The Assembly of Women*, who, because of their very repulsiveness, have a right to enjoy handsome young men before beautiful young women do). The undemocratic aspects of free sex were compensated for in our harmless and mildly ridiculous way: "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder" was preached more vigorously than formerly; the cosmetics industry had a big boom; and education and therapy in the style of Masters and Johnson, promising great orgasms to every subscriber, became common. My favorite was a course in sex for the elderly offered in a local YMCA and advertised over the radio with the slogan "Use It or Lose It." These were the days when pornography slipped its leash.

FEMINISM, by contrast, to the extent that it presented itself as a liberation, was much more a liberation from nature than from convention or society. Therefore, it was grimmer, unerotic, more of an abstract project; it required not so much the abolition of law as the institution of law, along with political activism. Instinct did not suffice. The negative sentiment of imprisonment was there, but what was wanted in its place was unclear. The programmatic language shifted from terms like "living naturally" (with reference to very definite bodily functions) to vaguer terms such as "self-definition," "self-fulfillment," "establishing priorities," "fashioning a life-style," etc.

Although feminism sees the position of women as flowing from nurture and not nature, the movement is not founded on nature. Its crucial contention is that biology should not be destiny, and biology is surely natural. And as for the contention that women's roles were always determined by human relations of domination, like those underlying slavery, the least that can be said about this thesis is that it would not seem to be confirmed by the bodily desires of all concerned, as was the sexual revolution. What is certain is that feminism has brought with it an unrelenting process of consciousness-raising and -changing. This process begins in what is probably a permanent human inclination, and is surely a modern one—the longing for the unlimited, the unconstrained—and ends, as do many modern movements that seek abstract justice, in forgetting nature and using force to refashion human beings to secure that justice.

Feminism is in accord with and encourages many elements of the sexual revolution, but uses them to different ends. A woman who can easily satisfy her desires and does not invest her emotions in exclusive relationships is also thereby liberated from the psychological tyranny of men, to do "more important things." Feminism has thus acted as a depressant on the Bacchanalian mood of the sexual revolution. Just as smoking and drinking overcame puritanical condemnation only to find themselves, after a brief moment of freedom, under equally moralistic attacks in the name not of God but of health and safety, so sex had a short day in the sun before it had to be reined in to accommodate the feminist sensibility. As a people, we are good not at gratifying ourselves but at delaying gratification for the sake of projects which promise future good. In this case the project is to overcome what is variously called male dominance, machismo, phallocracy, patriarchy, etc.—a set of arrangements to which men and their female collaborators still seem very attached, inasmuch as so many machines of war must be mounted against them.

Male sexual passion has become sinful again, because it culminates in "sexism." Women, it is said, are made into objects, they are raped by their husbands as well as by strangers, they are sexually harassed by professors and employers at school and at work. All these crimes must be legislated against and punished. What sensitive male can avoid realizing how dangerous his sexual passion is? Is there perhaps really original sin? Men, it turns out, had failed to read the fine print in the Emancipation Proclamation.

The new interference with sexual desire is more comprehensive, more intense, more difficult to escape than the older conventions, the grip of which was so recently relaxed. The July 14 of the sexual revolution was really only a day between the overthrow of the *ancien régime* and the onset of the Terror. The new reign of virtue, accompanied by relentless propaganda on radio and television and in the press, has its own catechism, inducing an examination of the conscience and the inmost sentiments for traces of possessiveness, jealousy, protectiveness—all those things men used to feel for women. There are, of course, a multitude of properly indignant censors equipped with loudspeakers and inquisitional tribunals.

CENTRAL to the feminist project, as to the sexual revolution, is the suppression of modesty. But the sexual revolution wanted modesty out of the way so that men and women could get together bodily, while feminism

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wants them to be easily able to get along separately.

In the old dispensation, modesty was *the* female virtue, because it governed the powerful desire that related men to women, providing a gratification in harmony with the procreation and rearing of children, the risk and responsibility of which fell naturally—that is, biologically—on women. Although modesty impeded sexual intercourse, its result was to make such gratification central to a serious life and to enhance the delicate interplay between the sexes, in which acquiescence of the will is as important as possession of the body. Diminution or suppression of modesty certainly makes it easier to attain the end of desire—which was the intention of the sexual revolution—but it also dismantles the structure of involvement and attachment, reducing sex to the thing-in-itself. This is where feminism enters.

Female modesty extends sexual differentiation from the sexual act to the whole of life. It makes men and women always men and women. The consciousness of directedness toward one another, with all the attendant attractions and inhibitions, informs every common deed. As long as modesty operates, men and women together are never just lawyers or pilots together. They have something else in common—ultimate ends or, as we now say, "life goals." Is winning this case or landing this plane what is most important, or is it love and family? As lawyers or pilots, men and women are the same, subservient to the one goal. As lovers or parents they are very different, but inwardly related by sharing the naturally given end of continuing the species. Modesty is a constant reminder of their peculiar relatedness and its outer forms and inner sentiments, which impede the self's free creation or capitalism's technical division of labor. It is a voice constantly repeating that a man and a woman have work to do together that is far different from that found in the marketplace, and of far greater importance.

This is why modesty was the first sacrifice demanded by Socrates in Plato's *Republic* for the establishment of a city where women would have the same education, live the same lives, and do the same jobs as men. If the difference between men and women is not to determine their ends, if it is not to be more significant than the difference between bald men and men with hair, then, says Socrates, they must strip and exercise naked together just as Greek men do.

With some qualifications, those of today's feminists who know of this passage in Plato praise it. They look upon it as prescient, for it culminates in an absolute liberation of women from the subjection of marriage and childbearing and -rearing, which become no more important than any other necessary but momentary biological event. Socrates provides birth control, abortion, and day-care centers, as well as marriages that last a day or a night and have as their only end the production of sound new citizens to replenish the city's stock, cared for by the city. He even adds infanticide to the list of conveniences available.

Socrates' radicalism extends to the relation of parent and child. The citizens are not to know their own children, for, if they were to love them above others, then the means that brought them into being, the intercourse of this man and this woman, would be judged to be of special significance. Then we would be back to the private family and the kinds of relatedness peculiar to it.

Socrates' proposal especially refers to one of the most problematic cases for those who seek equal treatment for women—the military. These citizens are warriors, and he argues that just as women can be liberated from subjection to men and take their places alongside them, men must be liberated from their special concern for women. A man must have no more compunction about killing the advancing female enemy than the male, and he must be no more protective of the heroine fighting on his right side than of the hero on his left.

Equal opportunity, then, and equal risk. The only concern is the common good, and the only relationship is to the community, bypassing the intermediate relationships that tend to take on a life of their own and were formerly thought to have natural roots in sexual attraction and love of one's own children. If that common good should disappear, the only alternative for the individual is a return to pure individuality, pure isolation.

IN THIS light we can discern the outlines of what has been going on recently among us. Conservatives who have been heartened by the latest developments within the women's movement are mistaken if they think that the movement and they are on common ground. Certainly both sides are against pornography. But the feminists are against it because it is a reminiscence of the old love relationship, which involved differentiated sexual roles—roles now interpreted as bondage and domination. Pornography caters to and encourages the longing men have for women, and its unrestrained satisfaction. This is what feminist anti-pornographers are against, not the debasement of sentiment or the threat to the family. And that is why they exempt homosexual pornography from censorship, for it is by definition not an accomplice to the male-female tyranny and even helps to undermine it.

Actually, feminists favor the demystifying role of pornography, which unmasks the true exploitative nature of the old relationships as, for Marxists, capitalism exposed the true nature of feudal relationships. The feminists' purpose is not, however, to remystify the worn-out systems but to push on toward the realm of freedom. They are sure that love in the old way is dead, and they are now wiping up the last desperate, untutored, semi-criminal traces of a kind of desire that no longer has a place in the world.

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It is, in short, one thing to want to prevent women from being ravished and brutalized because modesty and purity should be respected and women's weakness protected by responsible males; but it is quite another thing to protect them from male desire altogether so that they can live as they please. Feminism makes use of conservative moralism to further its own ends. This is akin to, and actually part of, the fatal old alliance between traditional conservatives and Marxists, which has had such far-reaching effects for more than a century. The two had nothing in common but their hatred of capitalism, the conservatives looking back to the revival of throne and altar in the various European nations, and to piety, the Marxists looking forward to the universal, homogeneous society and to freedom—reactionaries and progressives united against the present, feeding off the inner contradictions of the bourgeoisie.

Of course fundamentalists and feminists can collaborate to pass local ordinances banning smut, but the feminists do so to demonstrate their political clout in furthering their campaign against "bourgeois rights," which are, sad to say, enjoyed by people who want to see dirty movies or buy equipment to act out comically distorted fantasies. It is doubtful whether the fundamentalists gain much from this deal, because it guarantees the victory of a surging moral force that is "anti-family and anti-life."

Similarly, some conservatives are heartened by recent feminist discussion about the differences between men and women and about the special fulfillment of "parenting." These were, it is true, forbidden subjects at earlier stages of the movement, when equal rights was the primary theme. But this discussion has really only been made possible by the success of those earlier stages. A feminine nature or self may indeed be conceded now, but it has been definitely shaken loose from its teleological moorings. The feminine nature is not held to be in any reciprocal relation to the male nature, and they do not define one another. Women do have different physical structures, but they can make of them what they will—without paying a price. The feminine nature is a mystery to be worked out on its own, which can now be done because the male claim to it has been overcome.

The fact that there is today a more affirmative disposition toward childbearing does not imply that there is any natural impulse or compulsion to establish anything like a traditional fatherhood to complement motherhood. The children are to be had on the female's terms, with or without fathers, who are not to get in the way of the mother's free development. Children have always been, and still are, more the mother's anyway. Ninety percent or more of children of divorced parents stay with their mothers, whose preeminent stake in children has been enhanced by feminist demands—and by a consequent easy rationalization of male irresponsibility. So we have reproduction without family as its necessary implication—if family includes the presence of a male who has any kind of a definite function. The return to motherhood as a feminist ideal is only possible because feminism has triumphed over the family as it was once known, and women's freedom will not be limited by it. None of this means returning to "family values" or even bodes particularly well for the family as an institution, although it does mean that women have become freer to come to terms with the complexity of their situation.

By now the exhilaration of liberation has evaporated, for it is unclear what exactly was liberated or whether new and more onerous responsibilities have not been placed on us. And this is where I come back to today's university students, for whom everything is new. They are not sure what they feel for one another, and are without guidance about what to do with whatever they may feel.

The students of whom I am speaking are aware of all the sexual alternatives, and have been so from very early on in their lives, and they believe that all sexual acts are licit which do not involve real harm to others. They do not think they should feel guilt or shame about sex. They have had sex education in school, of "the biological facts, let-them-decide-the-values-for-themselves" variety, if not "the options-and-orientations" variety. They have lived in a world where the most explicit discussions and depictions of sex are all around them. They have had little fear of venereal disease; although it remains to be seen what effect AIDS will have, the wave of publicity about herpes a couple of years ago had almost no discernible psychological fallout. Birth-control devices and ready abortion have been available to them since puberty.

For the great majority, sexual intercourse was a normal part of their lives prior to college, and there was no fear of social stigma or even much parental opposition. Girls have had less supervision in their relations with boys than at any time in history. They are not precisely pagan, but there is an easy familiarity with each others' bodies and less inhibition about using their own for a broad range of erotic purposes. There is no special value placed on virginity in oneself or in one's partners. It is expected that there were others before and, incredibly to older folks, this does not seem to bother them, even though it provides a ground for predictions about the future. They are not promiscuous or given to orgies or casual sex, as it used to be understood. In general, they have one connection at a time, but most have had several serially. They are used to coed dormitories.

Many live together, almost always without expectation of marriage. It is just a convenient arrangement. They are not couples in the sense of having simulacra of marriage or a way of life different from that of other students not at present so attached. They are roommates, which is

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what they call themselves, with sex and utilities included in the rent. Every single obstacle to sexual relationships between young unmarried persons having disappeared, these relationships have become routine. To strangers from another planet, what would be the most striking thing is that sexual passion no longer includes the illusion of eternity.

Men and women are now used to living in exactly the same way and studying exactly the same things and having exactly the same career expectations. No man would think of ridiculing a female premed or prelaw student, or believe that these are fields not proper for women, or assert that a woman should put family before career. The law schools and medical schools are full of women, in numbers that are beginning to approach their proportion in the general population. There is very little ideology or militant feminism in most of the women, because they do not need it. The strident voices are present, and they get attention in the university newspapers and in student governments; but, again, the battle here has been won. Women students do not generally feel discriminated against or despised for their professional aspirations. The economy will absorb them, and they have rising expectations. They do not need the protection of the National Organization for Women. Sex no longer has any political agenda in universities except among homosexuals, who are not yet quite satisfied with their situation. But the fact that there is an open homosexual presence, with rights at least formally recognized by the authorities and almost all students, tells us much about current university life.

Students today understandably believe that they are the beneficiaries of progress. They have a certain benign contempt for their parents, particularly for their poor mothers, who were sexually inexperienced and had no profession to be taken as seriously as their fathers'. Superior sexual experience was always one of the palpable advantages that parents and teachers had over youngsters who were eager to penetrate the mysteries of life. But this is no longer the case, nor do students believe it to be so. They quietly smile at professors who try to shock them or talk explicitly about the facts of life in the way once so effective in enticing more innocent generations of students. Freud and D.H. Lawrence are very old hat. Better not to try.

Even less do students expect to learn anything about their situation from old literature, which, from the Garden of Eden on, made coupling a very dark and complicated business. On reflection, today's students wonder what all the fuss was about. Many think their older brothers and sisters discovered sex, as we now know it to be, in the 60's. In a course on Rousseau's *Confessions*, my students were astounded to learn that he had lived with a woman out of wedlock in the 18th century. Where could he have gotten the idea?

There are, of course, works of literature which affect a generation profoundly but have no interest at all for the next generation because their central themes prove ephemeral, whereas the greatest literature addresses the permanent problems of man. Ibsen's *Ghosts*, for example, lost all its force for young people when syphilis ceased to be a threat. As Aristotle teaches, pity for the plight of others requires the possibility that the same thing could happen to us. Now, however, the same things that used to happen to people, at least in the relations between the sexes, do not happen to students any more. And one must begin to wonder whether there is any permanent literature for them, because they do not believe that there are permanent problems. Anna Karenina and Madame Bovary are adulteresses, but the cosmos no longer rebels at their deed. Anna's only son today would probably have been awarded to her in the amicable divorce arrangements of the Karenins. All the romantic novels with their depictions of highly differentiated men and women, their steamy, sublimated sensuality, and their insistence on the sacredness of the marriage bond just do not speak to any reality that concerns today's young people. Neither do Romeo and Juliet with their struggle against parental opposition, Othello and his jealousy, or Miranda's carefully guarded innocence. St. Augustine, a seminarian told me, had sexual hang-ups. And let us not speak of the Bible, whose every No is now a Yes. With the possible exception of Oedipus, they are all gone, and they departed in the company of modesty.

When young people today have crushing problems in what used to be called sexual relationships, they cannot trace them back to any moral ambiguity in man's sexual nature. That, after all, was what was erroneously done in the past.

The best point of entry into the very special world of isolation or separateness inhabited by today's students is the astonishing fact that they usually do not, in what were once called love affairs, say, "I love you," and never, "I'll always love you." One student told me that of course he says "I love you" to girlfriends, "when we are breaking up." It is the clean and easy break—no damage, no fault—at which they are adept. This is understood to be morality, respect for the other person's freedom.

Perhaps young people do not say "I love you" because they are honest. They do not experience love—too familar with sex to confuse it with love, too preoccupied with their own fates to be victimized by love's mad self-forgetting, the last of the genuine fanaticisms. Then there is distaste for love's fatal historical baggage—sex roles, making women into possessions and objects without respect for their self-determination. Young people today are afraid of making *commitments*, and the point is that love is commitment, and much more.

When marriage occurs it does not usually seem to result from a decision and a conscious will to

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take on its responsibilities. The couple have lived together for a long time, and by an almost imperceptible process, they find themselves married, as much out of convenience as passion, as much negatively as positively (not really expecting to do much better, since they have looked around and seen how imperfect all fits seem to be). Among the educated, marriage these days seems to be best acquired, as Macaulay said about the British empire, in a fit of absent-mindedness.

Part of the inability to make sexual commitments results from an ideology of the feelings. Young people are always telling me such reasonable things about jealousy and possessiveness and even their dreams about the future. But as to dreams about the future with a partner, they have none. That would be to impose a rigid, authoritarian pattern on the future, which should emerge spontaneously. This means they can foresee no future, or that the one they would naturally foresee is forbidden them, by current piety, as sexist. Similarly, why should a man or a woman be jealous if his or her partner has sexual relations with someone else? A serious person today does not want to force the feelings of others. The same goes for possessiveness.

When I hear such things, all so sensible and in harmony with a liberal society, I feel that I am in the presence of robots. This ideology only works for people who have had no experience of the feelings, have never loved, have been abstracted from the texture of life. These prodigies of reason need never fear Othello's fate. Kill for love! What can that mean?

It may very well be that their *apatheia* is a suppression of feeling, anxiety about getting hurt. But it might also be the real thing. Having digested the incompatibility of ends, people may have developed a new kind of soul. None of the sexual possibilities students have actualized was unknown to me. But their lack of passion, of hope, of despair, of a sense of the twinship of love and death—the lack of all this is incomprehensible to me. When I see a young couple who have lived together throughout their college years leave each other with a handshake and move out into life, I am struck dumb.

Students do not date any more. Dating was the petrified skeleton of courtship. They live in herds or packs with no more sexual differentiation than any herds have when not in heat. Human beings can, of course, engage in sexual intercourse at any time. But today there are none of the conventions invented by civilization to take the place of heat, to guide mating, and perhaps to channel it. Nobody is sure who is to make the advances, whether there are to be a pursuer and a pursued, what the event is to mean. They have to improvise, for roles are banned, and a man pays a high price for misjudging his partner's attitude. The act takes place but it does not separate the couple from the flock, to which they immediately return as they were before, undifferentiated.

It is easier for men to get gratification than it used to be, and many men have the advantage of being pursued. Certainly they do not have to make all kinds of efforts and pay all kinds of attention, as men once did. There is an easy familiarity. But at least some of these advantages for men are offset by nervousness about their sexual performance. In the past a man could hope to be admired for what he brought; now he can be pretty sure that he is being compared and judged, which is daunting. And certain aspects of the undeniably male biology can make it difficult for him to perform and cause him to prefer being the one to express the desire.

Women are still pleased by their freedom and their capacity to chart an independent course for themselves. But they frequently suspect that they are being used, that in the long run they may need men more than men need them, and that they cannot expect much from the feckless contemporary male. They despise what men used to think women had to offer (that is partly why it is now offered so freely), but they are dogged by doubt whether men are very impressed by what they are now offering instead. Distrust suffuses the apparently easy commerce between the sexes. There is an awful lot of breaking up, surely disagreeable, though nothing earthshaking. Exam time is a great moment for students to separate. They are under too much stress and too busy to put up with much trouble from a relationship.

"Relationships," not love affairs, are what they have. Love suggests something wonderful, exciting, positive, and firmly seated in the passions. A relationship is gray, amorphous, suggestive of a project, without a given content, and tentative. You work at a relationship, whereas love takes care of itself. In a relationship the difficulties come first, and there is a search for common ground. Love presents illusions of perfection to the imagination and is forgetful of all the natural fissures in human connection. About relationships there is ceaseless anxious talk, the kind one cannot help overhearing in student hangouts or restaurants frequented by men and women who are "involved" with one another, the kind of obsessive prattle so marvelously captured in old Nichols and May routines or Woody Allen films.

The reliance on relationships is a self-delusion because it is founded on an inner contradiction. Relations between the sexes have always been difficult, and that is why so much of our literature is about men and women quarreling. There is certainly legitimate ground to doubt their suitability for each other, given the spectrum—from the harem to Plato's *Republic*—of imaginable and actually existing relations between them. That man is not made to be alone is all very well, but who is made to live with him?

This is why men and women hesitated before marriage, and courtship was thought necessary to

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find out whether the couple was compatible, and perhaps to give them basic training in compatibility. No one wanted to be stuck forever with an impossible partner. But, for all that, they knew pretty much what they wanted from one another. The question was whether they could get it (whereas our question today tends to be what is wanted). A man was to make a living and protect his wife and children, and a woman was to provide for the domestic economy, particularly in caring for husband and children. The arrangement implicit in marriage, even if it was only conventional, told those who entered into it what to expect and what the satisfactions were supposed to be. Very simply, the family was a sort of miniature body politic in which the husband's will was the will of the whole. The woman could influence her husband's will, and that will was supposed to be informed by love of wife and children.

Now all of this has simply disintegrated. It does not exist, nor is it considered good that it should. But nothing certain has taken its place. Neither men nor women have any idea what they are getting into any more, or, rather, they have reason to fear the worst. There are two equal wills, and no mediating principle to link them and no tribunal of last resort. What is more, neither of the wills is certain of itself. This is where the "ordering of priorities" comes in, particularly with women, who have not yet decided which comes first, career or children. People are no longer raised to think they ought to regard marriage as the primary goal and responsibility, and their uncertainty is mightily reinforced by the divorce statistics, which imply that putting all of one's psychological eggs in the marriage basket is a poor risk.

The inharmoniousness of final ends finds its most concrete expression in the female career, which is now precisely the same as the male career. There are two equal careers in almost every household composed of educated persons under thirty-five. And those careers are not mere means to family ends. They are personal fulfillments. In this nomadic country it is more than likely that one of the partners will be forced, or have the opportunity, to take a job in a city other than the one where his or her spouse works. What to do? They can stay together with one partner sacrificing his career to the other, they can commute, or they can separate. None of these solutions is satisfactory. More important, what is going to happen is unpredictable. Is it the marriage or the career that will count most? Women's careers today are qualitatively different from what they were up to twenty years ago, and such conflict is now inevitable. The result is that both marriage and career are devalued.

I am not arguing here that the old family arrangements were good or that we should or could go back to them. I am only insisting that we not cloud our vision to such an extent that we believe that there are viable substitutes for them just because we want or need them or think we have devised them. All our reforms have helped to do is to strip the teeth of our gears, which can therefore no longer mesh. They spin idly, side by side, unable to set the social machine in motion. It is at this exercise in futility that young people must look when thinking about their future.

Women are pleased by their successes, their new opportunities, their agenda, their moral superiority. But underneath everything lies the more or less conscious awareness that they are still dual beings by nature, capable of doing most things men do and also wanting to have children. They may hope otherwise, but they fully expect to pursue careers, to have to pursue careers, while caring for children alone. And what they expect and plan for is likely to happen.

The men have none of the current ideological advantages of the women, but they can opt out without too much cost. In their relations with women they have little to say; convinced of the injustice of the old order, for which they were responsible, and practically incapable of changing the direction of the juggernaut, they wait to hear what is wanted. They want relationships, but they anticipate a huge investment of emotional energy that is just as likely as not to end in bankruptcy. They try to adjust, but they are ready to take off in an instant.

Meanwhile, one of the strongest, oldest motives for marriage is no longer operative. Men can now easily enjoy the sex that previously could only be had in marriage. It is strange that the tiredest and stupidest bromide mothers and fathers preached to their daughters—"He won't respect you or marry you if you give him what he wants too easily"—turns out to be the truest and most probing analysis of the current situation. Women can say they do not care, that they want men to have the right motives or none at all, but everyone, and they best of all, knows that they are being, at most, only half-truthful with themselves.

THIS, then, is the campus sexual scene in a world shaped by the extension of the principle of freedom through the sexual revolution and the extension of the principle of equality through feminism. Relativism in theory and lack of relatedness in practice make students unable to think about or look into their futures, and they shrivel up within the confines of the present and the material *I*. They are willing to mutter the prescribed catechism, the substitute for thought, which promises them salvation, but there is little faith. As a very intelligent student said to me, "We are all obsessively going to the well, but we always come up dry."

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Is Messianism Good for the Jews?

Jacob Katz

Perhaps it is permissible at this point to say, with all due caution, that Jewish historiography has generally chosen to ignore the fact that the Jews have paid a very high price for the messianic idea.

—GERSHOM SCHOLEM, *Sabbetai Zevi: The Mystical Messiah*

EVER since biblical antiquity, messianism has been an integral component in the making of Jewish history. This much is impressed upon the reader of any treatment of Jewish experience. But what function, exactly, has messianism fulfilled in Jewish history? And specifically, what positive contribution has it made to the maintenance and survival of the Jewish community?

The nature of Jewish messianism can best be seen by comparing it with parallel phenomena, and perhaps especially with its historical competitor, Christian messianism. From the point of view of dogma, the main difference between the two of course concerns the advent of the messiah, with Christianity claiming that this occurrence has already taken place, Judaism placing it in the indefinite future. The two also differ in their essential notions of what constitutes messianic redemption; Christian messianism emphasizes the concept of individual, otherworldly salvation, while Jewish messianism stresses the fate of the nation within the unfolding affairs of this world.

Revealing as such distinctions are, however, they expose merely a few facets of Jewish messianism. To arrive at a more comprehensive evaluation, we need to view it in the light of messianism as a general anthropological phenomenon.

The expectation of some ideal state of human affairs, to be ushered in by a legendary hero in some undefined future, is a very common, almost universal, human idea. The specific features of this visionary state tend almost always to conform to the image of some ideal early phase in the development of a society; the future deliverance is thus pictured not as something absolutely new but rather as the recovery of a lost possession. Finally, the messianic vision, complete with its projection into the future of an idyllic primordial past, offers a kind of inverse picture of the unhappy present; all the want and suffering with which we are burdened will vanish, to be replaced by the order and repose and plenty now painfully missing from our lives. It is thus no accident that the idea of messianism is often subsumed by scholars under the heading of "utopia."

All messianic imaginings involve such utopian elements, Jewish messianism not excepted. In the popular mind, the messianic era is embellished with all sorts of fantastic, supernatural blessings, clear compensations for what the individual or the nation feels to be lacking in the present. But while in the common run of messianic utopias these unrealistic elements constitute the main substance, in Jewish messianism they are accretions added on to a basic nucleus of what one can only call historical realism. With others, the utopian imagination has had to invent a place where ideal life once existed, and where it will once again come into being. In Jewish messianism, the point of reference in the past, as well as the scene of future reconstruction, is a concrete spot on earth—the land of Israel. This by itself sets Jewish messianism apart from all its parallels.

As with geography, so with other details of the expected reconstruction of Jewish life. These include the restoration of the national body with all its presently defunct institutions: the Temple in Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin, the lower courts of Jewish law, and all the rituals connected with them. True, over the centuries of messianic speculation these institutions in their future incarnation were not always conceived as simple replicas of their former selves: according to a midrashic tradition popularized by the 11th-century commentator Rashi, for instance, the Temple of the messianic period would not be built by human hands but would be sent down in its entirety from

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heaven. The reestablishment of the Sanhedrin, too, was mostly thought to be dependent upon a miraculous event, namely, the appearance of the Prophet Elijah, who was believed to be living in heaven. In the 12th century the philosopher Moses Maimonides purged the messianic vision of its supernatural accretions, yet he too endowed the messianic era with a spirituality transcending the normal cast of life.

Indeed, no vision of the messianic future was wholly without some supernatural dimension. Yet even those who openly indulged in the fantastic and the miraculous always retained a foundation of realism. Remote as the national homeland and its ancient institutions had become to a people in dispersion, a certain fund of real knowledge about them was transferred to later generations through the literary and religious tradition. Simply by listening attentively to the weekly reading from the Pentateuch and Prophets in the synagogue, a Jew would become acquainted with the scene of his people's historical past and their longed-for future. Those who studied the Mishnah and the Talmud learned what a life regulated by the old institutions was like. Moreover, a good part of the ancient religious and even the juridical constitution of Jewish life continued to operate, if in edited form, in every Jewish community: one need only mention the synagogue with its rituals of worship and the local rabbinical court whose jurisdiction derived from talmudic law.

It was not simply the antiquity of these institutions that commended them. After all, the Christian Church, too, molded its service according to that of the Temple in Jerusalem—although by claiming for its liturgy the same expiating effect as Temple sacrifice, the Church also meant to confirm the obsolescence of its forerunner. The synagogue, by contrast, presented its worship service as a mere temporary substitute, and pointedly included supplications for the future restoration of the bygone paradigm. The rabbinical courts as well remained permanently alert to their fragmented condition, and self-consciously aware of their limited authority compared with that of the Sanhedrin. In schools and academies, the course of rabbinical studies embraced laws concerning now-suspended topics having to do with life in a Jewish commonwealth—another steady reminder of the expected reconstruction.

If messianic expectations received support from Jewish ritual and law, the reverse is also true: Jewish institutions were strengthened in far-reaching ways by the fact of their expected revival. There exists an obvious interdependence between the two phenomena—the adherence of the Jewish community to its present religious configuration and its committed belief in a messianic future. The hope that Jewish ritual and law would one day recover their pristine integrity served to endow their present practice with significance, while this same practice, however necessarily truncated, served as a reminder of what would some day be made whole.

The combination of the two goes a long way toward accounting for the much marveled-at survival of Jewry during its ever-lengthening years of exile. It is at the same time an answer to the question of why the prolonged exile and even the repeated disappointment suffered by the Jews when prognosticated messianic dates failed to bring deliverance, and messianic pretenders were exposed as frauds, proved unable to uproot the messianic faith. For abandoning messianic belief would have meant rejecting Jewish ritual itself, the consequence of which would have been to drop out of the Jewish community and join the surrounding Christian or Muslim society. Such crucial steps did, as we know, occur, both in connection with messianic crises and independently of them. Still, genuine or pretended conversions to another religion remained the way adopted by individuals and did not endanger Jewish communal survival.

WHY did not the failure of earlier prognostications and pretensions prevent their recurrence in later times? The answer is simply the incapacity to learn from the experience of former generations, an almost universal human shortcoming. In any society, as long as the general conditions and intellectual climate remain constant, similar paths will again and again be followed to resolve social problems, no matter how many times they have failed in the past. The tangible circumstances of Diaspora Jewry consisted of political impotence and socioeconomic degradation, while its intellectual universe was circumscribed by its commitment to religious tradition, the sacred texts of which were understood in a super-fundamentalist manner. In line with this approach it was believed that the writings of the Bible and the Talmud, as well as of the Kabbalah, might contain hidden meanings and messages which could and should be deciphered. To a people convinced of ultimate redemption, the predetermined date of which might be coded in one of the holy documents, discovering this date became a coveted objective.

The Jewish literary tradition also contained overt statements concerning preconditions for the advent of the messiah: the strict observance of the Sabbath by the entire community, a general repentance, and the like. These statements, too, were taken literally. Often, it is true, they were invoked by preachers or moralists mainly to emphasize the importance of those religious obligations on which redemption was said to depend. At times, however, the declared intention was to help usher in the messianic era by fulfilling its traditionally fixed prerequisites.

A case in point is the endeavor of an itinerant preacher in 16th-century Italy to oblige the Jewish communities of that land to be especially

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punctilious in observing two Sabbaths in a row. To this category also belong the attempts by adepts of practical Kabbalah to force the hand of the Almighty by sheer magical procedures. All such undertakings, prompted though they may have been by the recurrent tribulations of exile, also drew on the prevailing acceptance by Jews of the messianic tradition in its strictly literal interpretation. As this tradition also predicated the appearance of a personal redeemer, the ground was laid for pretenders, sincere and otherwise, to present themselves as such. The long line of false messiahs is a feature of traditional messianism; their activity ceased at the dawn of the age of rationalism with the undermining of the entire system of belief of which traditional messianism was a part.

Before we get to this point, however, we should cast an eye on the consequences, or rather the side-effects, of traditional messianism. The messianic belief projected a radical change in the life of the community in an undefined future. For the present, however, it paradoxically seems rather to have secured the status quo. This is true not only with regard to religious practice—concerning which any suggestion of possible change, insofar as it was deemed conceivable at all, was postponed to the messianic era. Even in the relatively neutral sphere of external political and social conditions, belief in a messianic deliverance served to enforce an extreme quietism. Whatever dreams and fancies may have evolved within the Jewish communal world were channeled into the projected messianic vision, and never crystallized into a humanly realizable scheme of redemption. Political passivity came, indeed, to be taken for granted, as something intrinsic to Jewish fate in the Diaspora. The 17th-century Venetian Jewish apologist Simone Luzzatto was not unjustified in pointing to this characteristic of the Jewish community as evidence for his argument that the incumbent political powers could confidently rely on the silent submission of the Jews to their desires.

Yet while the messianic utopia stultified the will to seek ways and means for relieving the pains of exile, it did little to help Jews endure those pains with equanimity. On the contrary, the conviction that they were in a state of temporary abandonment, from which they could and should be redeemed, made their present suffering only the more depressing. Prayers and supplications are replete with complaints about and protests against the undeserved agonies of exile, sometimes confused with the normal trials of human existence. Thus, one well-known prayer in the Yom Kippur liturgy, which enumerates all the bitter consequences of the destruction of the Temple, includes such calamities as famine and plague, not unknown in biblical times, either. The idea of messianic redemption, with its promise of a reestablished Eden, must have made present conditions appear even blacker and less bearable than they were in reality.

DESPITE the obvious incongruities involved in the traditional messianic concept, it held sway well into the early modern age. Not even the deep despondency wrought by the spectacular apostasy of the messianic pretender Sabbetai Zevi in the mid-17th century, after having mobilized the hopes and expectations of Jews all over the settled world, was able to sweep away the basic commitment to traditional messianism.

In the course of time, however, this belief encountered two explicit adversaries. The first was rationalism, in whose light fundamentalism of all sorts came to look more and more dated. The second was the effort, on the part of Jews and non-Jews alike, to secure for the Jews a permanent home in their present lands of domicile. In reaction to these two forces there began a critical reinterpretation of Jewish messianism, the results of which ran the full gamut of intellectual possibilities from outright rejection to an embrace of the messianic impulse as a central theme in the Jewish "mission" to the world.

These reinterpretations were the work of Western modernists, Reform-minded theologians, and philosophers. In more traditional circles, especially in Eastern Europe, the fundamentalist trend lingered on, though there too it lost its former dynamic. Thus, following a kabbalistic text, the year 1840 was fixed as a messianic date, and rumor of the impending wonderful event spread practically through the entire Jewish world, finding committed adepts especially among Hasidim but also among Sephardi kabbalists and others. Yet the excitement remained rather subdued. Similarly, although a number of charismatic hasidic rabbis may have been regarded by their followers and possibly even by themselves as potential candidates for the role of messiah, such fancies failed to be formulated as actual claims.

Orthodox Judaism did continue to adhere to the dogma of a personal messiah, defending the concept repeatedly in various controversies with modernist opponents. On one occasion, it even became a central issue in a lawsuit. The suit was brought in 1864 by an anti-Semitic Catholic priest, Sebastian Brunner, against Leopold Kompert, the publisher of a Jewish periodical in Vienna. This periodical had published an essay by the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz arguing that the carrier of the messianic mission spoken of in the prophecies of Isaiah was the Jewish people and not an individual person. Graetz's interpretation, according to the priest, amounted to a denial of a central tenet of Orthodox Judaism as well as of Christianity.

Two experts were called in behalf of the defendant: Isaak Noah Mannheimer, the modern preacher of the Vienna Jewish community, and

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its Orthodox rabbi, Eliezer Horowitz. Both testified to the effect that although messianism was a central Jewish tenet, the details—including the issue of a personal messiah—were open to legitimate debate. An outcry thereupon arose against such latitudinarianism. Typically enough, it was orchestrated by the two leaders of modern Orthodoxy in Germany, Azriel Hildesheimer (then residing in Hungary) and Samson Raphael Hirsch. It was in this curious way that Orthodoxy came explicitly to reaffirm its adherence to a fundamentalist conception of the personal messiah.

If the Orthodox could thus boast of carrying on an unbroken tradition, their claim would scarcely bear critical examination. In fact, even with the Orthodox, adherence to the messianic tenet was becoming a formality; the old longing for redemption, conditioned as it had been by the sociopolitical status of Jewry and bound up with its entire religious constitution, was on its way to becoming a mere abstract dogma. Thus Rabbi Moshe Sofer, rebutting the argument of Reformers that belief in a messianic deliverance was impeding efforts by Jews to be accepted by the state as citizens, declared that the longing for redemption stemmed not from any sense of material deprivation from which Jews hoped to be liberated but rather from an aspiration to *spiritual* elevation.

This statement, originally perhaps no more than an apologetic device, in the course of time became literally true. For the Orthodox no less than their Reform-minded opponents came to envisage the alleviation of their material disabilities not in a return to their ancient homeland but rather in the expansion of their foothold in the lands of their present sojourn. The degree to which the changed sociopolitical circumstances of Jewry had sapped messianism of its vitality could be seen no less in Orthodox dogmatism than in the watered-down, universalistic exegeses of Reform theologians.

The overt neutralization of messianism and even its denial did not, however, imply the demise of its influence. So basic a belief was bound to leave traces in the mentality of later generations, estranged though they were from its formal concepts. True, traditional and modern times are divided by the intervening process of secularization, often conceived of as obliterating all tokens of tradition, especially those connected with the tenets and prescriptions of religion. But this is in fact a misreading of the nature of secularization, under whose auspices outmoded religious patterns may be abandoned but often only after the underlying emotional impulses have been transferred to more timely objectives.

For example, historians who have dealt with the disproportionate part played by Jews in modern socialist movements have pointed repeatedly to a possible link between Jewish messianism and the socialist idea, both of which promise a this-worldly solution to the problems of the oppressed and the disinherited. A similar affinity has been proposed between Jews and other avant-garde movements striving for a better future for mankind. Though such suggestions are hardly susceptible of proof, neither should they be dismissed as pure fantasy. Traces of a culturally inherited mentality may be present and active without the carriers of this mentality being conscious of it.

It is true that the Jewish champions of socialism and other such movements have seldom if ever linked their chosen ideas with their Jewishness; some, such as Karl Marx, would have scorned the very idea. And it is also true that the marginal position of the Jews in most societies to which they gained access in the wake of their emancipation may have impelled them to join movements bent upon reforming or even revolutionizing social conditions generally. Still, the operation of such motives does not exclude the contribution of less obvious but no less potent forces deriving from an inherited mentality. Does not the sheer prophetic pathos revealed by some of the modern Jewish social reformers and revolutionaries indicate an influx of energy from a hidden, premodern source?

Obviously the tracing of a Jewish influence in the actions of people operating within the arena of non-Jewish society, often after having renounced their ties with their Jewish background, is a delicate and highly speculative exercise. We are on firmer ground in surmising a messianic impetus behind the ideas and ideologies of Jews who set out to realize their vision of a just society within the Jewish sphere itself.

The early Zionist pioneers neglected the religious tradition of their forefathers no less radically than did their socialist peers; they may have also derived their socialist doctrines and utopian fancies from the same sources as did other followers of Marx. But by fixing the locus of their ideals in the ancient homeland, the scene of the long-awaited messianic denouement, they revealed their indebtedness to tradition. In fact, this indebtedness was not just an implicit one. The ideological pronouncements of the early Zionists, convinced that their struggle for a just Jewish society was extending the legacy of the Hebrew prophets of old, often carried explicit messianic overtones.

It could be said that the selective fashion in which secular Zionists related to Jewish tradition in general and messianism in particular—retaining only the connection with the ancient homeland and whatever could be integrated into the vision of a nationally grounded culture, while rejecting all the rest—was no less reductive than the universalistic reinterpretation of the liberal religious reformers. Still, there was a difference. What Reform provided was (to use the terminology of

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Karl Mannheim) a new ideology, one which served to vindicate a sociopolitical position already or soon to be achieved. The Zionist vision, on the other hand, was a utopia, the achievement of which called for an unwavering commitment in the face of extremely great difficulties and repeated setbacks. It is a historical fact that these requirements were met, and more than met. Even in its derivative form, perhaps only in its derivative form, Jewish messianism revealed its true dynamic power.

In the last analysis, what facilitated the repeated permutations of Jewish messianism in modern times was the continuing oscillation in the sociopolitical status of the Jews. The *promise* of civic emancipation led to an enervation of the messianic emotion; but the granting of emancipation, and the subsequent disappointment at its failure to "solve" the problem of Jewish existence in the Diaspora, opened the way to a recovery of messianism's hidden potential.

A CRITICAL look at the effects of emancipation was initiated as early as the 1860's by such perceptive thinkers as Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and the socialist Moses Hess. The latter expounded upon the meaning of Jewish social disabilities despite the fact of emancipation, while the former, committed to the unimpaired validity of Jewish tradition, argued that civic liberation could not substitute for national liberation but should rather be understood as a phase in the divinely promoted scheme of redemption.

Both these thinkers evolved a proto-Zionist vision, Hess of a secular and Kalischer of a religious coloration, and both regarded themselves as legitimate interpreters of the messianic tradition. As a modern thinker Hess was of course unimpeded by dogmatic commitments and felt free to select from the messianic tradition whatever tallied with his imagination. Kalischer had to grapple with the fundamentalist concepts, and the result of his struggle was a remarkable compromise. He retained the dogma of a personal messiah but postponed the date of his arrival to a later point in the redemptive process, while the immediate steps to be taken—that is, the ingathering of the people in its homeland—were understood by him to be a human assignment.

At the time, both these views were regarded as highly idiosyncratic. They had to lead a kind of subterranean existence until well into the 1880's, when in the wake of emerging anti-Semitism in Germany and bloody pogroms in Russia a more critical attitude toward emancipation gained currency in the West, while in the East Jews despaired of ever achieving it. Zionism, as a way out of this predicament, now acquired fresh credibility with substantial sectors of the Jewish community in the East and with some groups in the West as well, even though (as its opponents were quick to point out) it failed to offer an immediate solution to the pressing problems of the present. In that sense Zionism remained a utopia; that despite this it succeeded in retaining the fidelity of its adherents was due to the widespread belief in its divinely or historically predetermined character—an unmistakable indication of its genetic connection with the messianic tradition.

Still, Zionism's clear historical background notwithstanding, there was never any lack of attempt to present it as something removed from messianic connotations of any sort. Paradoxically, such attempts were often prompted by the desire to gain for the movement the support of Orthodox circles that still adhered to the formal tenets of fundamentalism and looked askance at Zionism for its more or less overt trespassing on traditional messianic ground. To meet this objection, Orthodox Zionists, defying the conception of Rabbi Kalischer and his followers, presented Zionism as a mere rescue operation designed to benefit deprived sections of Jewry and having nothing whatsoever to do with messianism.

The effectiveness of this argument may well be doubted. The practical aspect of the Zionist enterprise—providing a haven for refugees—evolved only in later stages of development. Initially, when the very practicability of the enterprise was still in doubt, a commitment to it demanded reserves of endurance and self-sacrifice that could only come out of an almost irrational belief in its historical necessity, a belief nourished in turn by some variant of the messianic tradition.

WITH the establishment in 1948 of the secular state of Israel, the messianic issue would seem to have lost all actual point. The leaders of the new country, though imbued with the messianic pathos of Zionist ideology, set out to conduct the affairs of state according to rational principles, granting Jewish tradition only a partial and in many respects an emblematic role. But then, in the wake of the Six-Day War of 1967, in a dialectical turn of history, there arose in Israel a new, quasi-fundamentalist messianism, one that has claimed for itself an authority to determine major policies relating to the fate of the country.

The term "quasi-fundamentalist" seems justified here since, unlike their Diaspora forebears, the proponents of this new trend, the leaders of Gush Emunim, are hardly the passive adherents of an abstract messianic concept but rather men and women of political action, who are impelled by the belief that the determination of Israel's geographical boundaries is a matter of messianic significance. Given this belief, it is considered unnecessary by them to weigh all the possible consequences of actions taken to further their goals, since those goals have in any event been ratified by the force of divine will.

The danger of granting such people a leading influence in the conduct of the state has been

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clearly enough recognized. But in reaction to them their opponents have gone so far in the other direction as to formulate a revised view of Zionist history that denies the role of traditional messianism altogether. Obviously such a view is contradicted by historical fact, and as a strategy aimed at countering the influence of Gush Emunim it is doomed to failure.

Zionism need feel no embarrassment over its association with Jewish messianism, understood as the longing for regained independence in one's own country. This was, as we have seen, the common feature of Jewish messianism in all its premodern variants, and was so transmitted to later generations. That the Jewish national movement was deeply nourished from this source can be seen in the collective popular reaction to some of the decisive events in Zionist history—the appearance of Theodor Herzl, the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration, the installation of a Jew, Sir Herbert Samuel, as the first High Commissioner under the British Mandate, and the 1947 decision of the United Nations in favor of a Jewish state. Contemporaries invariably described the climate created by these events as messianic, no doubt because they were identified in the popular mind as steps toward the coveted goal, the restoration of Jewish self-rule in the ancient Jewish homeland.

True, more far-reaching expectations of a religious, national, and social character were also attached to the hoped-for culmination of the historical process. Yet about the desirability of these objectives there was never any unanimity. On the contrary, these particular goals became bones of contention among factions and parties struggling with one another in democratic fashion for cultural and political preeminence. A dissonant tone has been introduced into this legitimate contest by the faction now claiming fundamentalist messianic warrant for its own political objectives. But the proper response to this claim cannot be a repudiation of the historical connection of Zionism with messianism.

THE political challenge represented by the new fundamentalism can in the last resort be met only on the ground of politics. But the ideological component of the new fundamentalism calls also for an appropriate ideological response. Such a response is, indeed, a historical imperative, lest by ceding this ground to the fundamentalists the Jewish people come indeed to pay a heavy price for their lasting commitment to the messianic idea.

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Requiem for the "Establishment"

H. J. Kaplan

AN American newsman once came to me in Paris, during the Vietnam peace talks in 1967, where I was serving as the spokesman for the delegation, and raised an impertinent question: wasn't Averell Harriman, the head of our delegation, a *terminally* stupid man? Off the record, of course. Just between you and me. Since the intention, clearly, was to surprise and shock, I made a point of telling him that one of his colleagues had phrased the same question in the same way with respect to Henry Cabot Lodge, our Ambassador in Saigon. So he was confirming the rule, "The more you try to be outrageous and eccentric, the more you sound like a thundering herd."

"Can I quote you on that?"

"No, you cannot."

"It's a pity. I'm doing a piece for Sunday on the credibility gap. . . . But you never answered my question."

What put me in mind of this exchange after lo! these twenty years, was reading Averell Harriman on George Kennan, as quoted by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas in *The Wise Men*, subtitled *Six Friends and the World They Made*.* "I used him on every occasion that I possibly could," Harriman said, "and I consulted him on every subject. He had good instincts. He is a man who understood Russia but didn't understand the United States." The last sentence is exactly right. It speaks to the suggestion that Harriman had failed to recognize Kennan's abilities in Moscow, and it explains why Kennan, for all his gifts as a writer and historian, never came to much as an Ambassador himself. The case could hardly be made in fewer words. As for my answer to the question about Harriman's intelligence, I'm afraid it wandered off into a long disquisition on possible meanings of the term. Deconstruction, *avant la lettre*. In Paris, in the spokesmanship business, this was called drowning the fish.

The Wise Men, in any event, will be seen (and quite rightly) as an engaging and valuable addition to the lengthening list of studies and memoirs devoted to the so-called Eastern Establishment, which is generally considered to have played a determining role in shaping and managing our foreign policy during a crucial period in our contemporary history: from the onset of World War II to the fall of Saigon. But did it really? The Establishment is a nebulous concept, the authors point out, and in the end, characteristically, they prefer to moot the question, as well as the proposition it seems to imply, namely, that in this century, until quite recently in fact, the United States had an honest-to-god governing class on the model, say, of England or France. Isaacson and Thomas do not so much address issues of this kind—sociological and historical—as report them. *The Wise Men* is essentially a series of artfully related "parallel lives," recounting the careers of six remarkable men who came out of similar circumstances, more or less, knew each other at school or in college, and worked together in business or government or both, harmoniously on the whole, during an exceptionally long and difficult period. Differently endowed and driven, they nevertheless had a great deal in common, socially at least; and they undoubtedly had a great deal to do with the way things worked out after the war.

All this is history to our authors, born in the early 50's and now editors at *Time* and *Newsweek*. For the members of my generation, however, dating from the great watershed of 1914-18, or soon thereafter, it is not so long ago, alas, roughly the span of our professional lives; so that for those of us who were employed abroad, especially in journalism or in government, *The Wise Men* will bring shock upon shock of recognition. This is indeed the way things looked—although the world already seems much altered since these men, with the occasional exception of Kennan, left the scene. Our parents used to sigh profoundly at the "acceleration of history," a favorite theme for 19th-century meditation. Here we are made to feel it like a wind.

The subtitle, of course, is not to be taken literally. The six friends, all born before or just after the turn of the century, were Averell Harriman, Dean Acheson, Robert A. Lovett, John J. McCloy,

H.J. KAPLAN, whose articles in COMMENTARY include "With the American Press in Vietnam" (May 1982) and "Brother Camus" (February 1983), spent twenty-five years in the Foreign Service.

* Simon & Schuster, 853 pp., $22.95.

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Jr., George F. Kennan, and Charles E. Bohlen. Important as they became, they had no illusions, nor do Isaacson and Thomas, that "the world they made" could have happened without a little help from Roosevelt, Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, and Truman, to mention only a few. So we are talking about what the French call *grands commis*, master clerks, not the top political leaders; and if I underscore the touch of hype in the subtitle it is precisely because few will notice and fewer will care. It goes with the genre. Nor do I mean this unkindly. *The Wise Men* belongs to a form of historiography more redolent of newsprint than of the academy, a genre in which titles are only half-seriously meant, to catch the eye, just as the occasional hyperbolic judgment or startling detail (revealing, for example, how little our leadership understood the world they were called upon to rebuild in 1945) is at once hedged and made harmless by another anecdote, so that the smooth flow of the narrative is preserved from the intrusion of political argument and thought. The genre I am referring to, of course, is the *cover story*—a term one normally associates with newsmagazines, not with books.

THE story begins, we are told, "with boys rowing at a New England prep school and riding horses in the snow on a sprawling ranch in Idaho." But this sentence actually occurs on page 35, at the end of a prefatory preview entitled "Architects of the American Century," replete with photographs of our protagonists in their prime, thumbnail biographical sketches which serve as captions, and finally an outline of what is to come, the approach, or argument, of the book:

> Harriman, Lovett, Acheson, McCloy, Kennan, Bohlen: two bankers, two lawyers, two diplomats. Besides being major players in their own right, they represent a cross-section of the postwar policy Establishment. The values they embodied were nurtured in prep schools, at college clubs, in the boardrooms of Wall Street, and at dinner parties in Washington. They shared a vision of public service as a lofty calling and an aversion to the pressures of partisan politics. They had a pragmatic and businesslike preference for realpolitik over ideology. As internationalists who respected the manners and traditions of Europe, they waged a common struggle against the isolationism of their time. Their world view was shaped by a fascination with the emergence of the Soviet Union as a world power and an unabashed belief in America's sacred destiny (and their own) to take the lead in protecting freedom around the globe and create what Henry Luce in a 1941 *Life* magazine article envisioned as "The American Century."

This passage is followed, characteristically, by a number of disclaimers. Isaacson and Thomas are skillful consensus writers, albeit within a range that does not include the "revisionism," much less the American self-hatred, still so fashionable in academia; so they hasten to concede that other men "from the same tradition" might have been included "in a biographical narrative of America's emergence as a global superpower," and several will in fact turn up—James Forrestal, for example, and Paul Nitze—as the story unfolds. Nor is it proposed that our heroes are entirely cut from the same cloth. McCloy's origins were modest, Kennan was a notorious loner, and it could be argued that some of these men, Lovett and Bohlen in particular, were managers and operators and had little influence on policy, after all. And yet,

> when considered together, these half-dozen friends fit together in a complementary way, epitomizing a style and outlook that played a dominant role in American policy-making. Regarding service as an honor and imbued with a sense of noblesse oblige, they glided easily between private and public careers. As individuals, and even more so as a group, they embody what has been called (by those who venerate them as well as those who malign them) the American Establishment.

That word again. Is (or was?) the American Establishment a reality, a metaphor, a joke, a conspiracy, or an illusion? All and none of the above. McCloy, cited by John Kenneth Galbraith as the very epitome of the Establishment, refuses the honor, although he does not deny the existence of *something*. "They were Skull and Bones, Groton, that sort of thing. That was the elite. Lovett, Harvey Bundy, Acheson, they called on tradition, a high tradition. They ran with the swift. I always had in mind, even to this day, that I was not really part of that." Which reminds our authors, Harvard men themselves, with distinguished postgraduate academic careers, that the high tradition invoked by McCloy was meritocratic. It coopted poor boys (like Dean Rusk and McCloy himself) too. In the end, Isaacson and Thomas record all the caveats and reduce the notion of the Establishment to what might (and alas might not) be called an unobjectionable minimum:

> This, then, is primarily a story about six influential men: their friendship, their power, their world, and their creation. However one defines the Establishment, these men were at its core, both because of who they were and how they were regarded. But by regarding them as individuals, the group becomes slightly less mysterious, and a lot more interesting.

HOWEVER that may be, *The Wise Men* is a fine account of the period, lucidly written and organized: a bravura performance. Even the most blasé contemporary, for whom the struggle over Western Europe is a thrice-told tale, will find surprises in this book—not in new disclosures or fresh interpretations, nor in the abundance of

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significant detail and anecdote, welcome as they are, but rather in the serene authority and aplomb with which these young iconoclasts marshal their material to confirm what we always suspected to be true but scarcely dared say: that we were right, essentially, after 1945, and our adversaries were wrong; that the American leadership made a fair and honorable attempt to work out a *modus vivendi* with the Soviets after the war, with due regard for their famous paranoia; and finally that the Soviet dictatorship, intent on extending its empire as far as possible to the West, was clearly and all but singlehandedly responsible for what came to be known as the cold war. In a word, as our friends in the European intelligentsia, Right and Left, used to accuse us of believing—yes, it was as *simple* as that. Now this, coming from two highly educated mainstream journalists today is more than surprising. It is astounding. The mystery is how Isaacson and Thomas have managed to hold on to their jobs.

This attitude toward the historical record is hedged, to be sure, as the formula requires. On the one hand, America's postwar policy, what Dean Acheson called the Creation, was a mighty achievement and the idea of containment was timely and right. On the other hand, we are told, the famous bipartisan consensus which made all this possible was fragile, short-lived, and perhaps purchased at too high a price: an excessively rigid anti-Communism, exaggerated rhetoric, overcommitment—the alleged vices that led us into the trap of Vietnam. The cover story, like a broker's assessment of the market, always requires a minimum of two hands. Nevertheless, the weight of the evidence is unmistakable and *The Wise Men* ends by saying as much, without the use of hands:

> They forced a reticent nation to face up to its global obligation, to act as magnanimous conqueror and rebuild friend and foe alike after World War II. They created an alliance that has securely preserved the West from aggression for onward of forty years. Compared to all earlier empires, the Pax Americana was extraordinarily generous and idealistic, indeed, sometimes overly so.

For one reader, at least, we touch here on what is or should have been the central subject of this book—one more relevant to our deeper distempers, in any case, than all the to-do about prep school and Ivy League associations, colorful as they were, and about that famous Establishment which reminds me of nothing so much as the tired old lines from *The Jew of Malta:*

> But that was in another country;
> And besides, the wench is dead.

NEVERTHELESS, if the Establishment theme leads nowhere in the end, the moral and political perspective of our Wise Men, these particular individuals, very definitely leads somewhere: directly, in fact, into the center of our current preoccupations. This, after all, is what the past is for—providing only that we decide to make it so. For a fleeting moment in our history, a crucial moment in world history, the government of the United States did something more or less right, no small achievement under the circumstances, thanks in considerable measure to the efforts of these gentlemen. We do well, then, to remember that moment of grace, and ask ourselves how it came to pass.

One thing these very different men had in common was longevity. They came of sturdy North European stock, worked hard, lived well, and (with the exception of Lovett who had a "good war" in the manner that was so meaningful to the Kennedy generation after World War II) were spared the hazards of military service. The least long-lived was Bohlen, who barely eked out his biblical three-score-and-ten, but his Foreign Service career was of record length since (unlike the others) he never did anything else after college; and the others, of course, although born a decade or more earlier, all survived Bohlen by ten, fifteen, or twenty years. (Of the six, only Kennan and McCloy are still alive.) One of the myriad of fascinating details I learned from *The Wise Men* is that Averell Harriman, who had a long meeting with Yuri Andropov in Moscow in October 1983, at the age of ninety-one, first saw Russia as a boy with his father, E. H. Harriman, the builder of the Union Pacific, in 1899. This comes out to an astounding eighty-four years between his first and last visits, and during those nine decades there were many others: business dealings in the early 20's, *à la* Armand Hammer; official trips during the war, including one in which he went along with his friend Churchill, having wrested permission from a bemused FDR to explain to Stalin why the second front had to be postponed; and as lend-lease administrator when the Germans were standing at the gates of Moscow; and Yalta, of course; and the ambassadorship, toward the end of the war, an extended visit that he took on at the behest of Roosevelt just as, twenty years later, he would take on various "menial" jobs in Kennedy's service, always reluctant to recognize that between him, *le pays réel*, and the President, *le pays légal*, there was a Secretary of State or any other authority or power. Like Charles de Gaulle, born a year earlier than Harriman in 1890, he almost invariably spoke of Russia, almost never of the Soviet Union, and by Russia he meant the Kremlin, the man or men we had to deal with, patiently, impassively, with an eye to getting the best deal we could.

In this attitude, as in his extraordinary endurance, Harriman was an extreme but not untypical example of the group. To be sure, Kennan and Bohlen were trained as Russian experts (under pleasant circumstances, during what now appear to us as the long and leisurely 20's before

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we had diplomatic relations with the Moscow regime), and unlike Harriman they came to know well and have genuinely sympathetic feelings for the Russian language, culture, and people. Kennan, when he retired to Princeton, published scholarly and autobiographical works in which he indulged his bent for reflection and his elegant prose. He is primarily and by vocation a writer, the only one of the six of whom this could be said, although some readers may well prefer the lucidity and spareness of Acheson's style.

But Kennan is the first to admit that his literary gifts have tended to make him a devil's advocate, and a rather obscure one at that, rather than a meticulous policy planner, which is what his understudy, Paul Nitze, became—to the great relief of Marshall, Acheson, and the entire State Department. In any event, all questions of personal vocation and feelings aside, the six friends were essentially at one in their conception of public service. Whatever one's inner inclinations—and Kennan's have sometimes been quite surprising—the name of the game was to look out for the country's interests and to get things done. And so they did, with an ease and confidence as to the manner born, although what they accomplished seems quite extraordinary in retrospect, when one compares them with their successors and thinks how uncharted the waters were. This, I would suggest, is why their longevity is important historically: because the moral, intellectual, and institutional underpinnings of their actions are rooted in a distant time, and in a very different United States.

Whatever one makes of the Establishment idea, no one will doubt that there was such a thing as an Old American or Wasp Ascendancy; and these men were certainly part of that. It was quite as capable of "faction" as our Founding Fathers foresaw that it would be, but with respect to the outside world (as in the task of Americanizing the immigrants who poured into the country after the middle of the last century) it was also quite as coherent and self-confident as the ethnic core groups of Western nation-states are wont to be. It was the real America, which did the right as God gave it to do the right—and until so recently that members of my generation find it difficult to believe that it has simply bowed out and that it is not waiting in the depths of the "silent majority" to reemerge and reassert itself, if not in the old way then in some new one. But this would take me too far afield, and more to my point is the fact that the old moral certainty, the sense of legitimacy that informed the Wasp Ascendancy, is gone, and so completely that the authors of *The Wise Men* barely pause in their swift flight to note it.

John McCloy, for example, who always led a charmed life in the eye of public opinion, with the minor exception of some muttering about his denazification policies in postwar Germany, is now almost routinely accused of insensitivity, and worse, for his refusal to bomb Auschwitz when reports of what was happening there came to the War Department in 1944; not to speak of his earlier insistence on interning Japanese Americans, in violation of the spirit and the letter of our laws. These decisions were not taken alone; they caused him some soul-searching, although he was hardly a searching soul; and they were perhaps arguable under the circumstances. But the point I am making is that no one questioned McCloy's *bona fides* a few decades ago.

Similarly, Kennan's famous elitism, his distaste for the American *hoi polloi*, his racial prejudices, all proceeded from an inner assurance that would hardly be conceivable today. Nor has anyone, to my knowledge, ever suggested that he is not a man of humane and liberal instincts. And yet, what is one to make of the cold contempt with which, when he was assigned to Berlin and Prague in 1939, he rebuffed the pleas of Jews—even old friends—who came to him for help when every other escape route was closed? (They had lost out, he seemed to be saying, so let them take their medicine, and not try to involve America in their plight.) Or of his impatience with the efforts undertaken in 1945 and 1946 to save a modicum of freedom for the Poles? These matters are passed over lightly or not at all in *The Wise Men*; one reads of them in Kennan's memoirs, which are remarkable for many reasons but not least because they recount such things without embarrassment or compunction. It simply never seems to have occurred to Kennan that anyone might doubt that he was acting and reacting as a Foreign Service officer should, unsentimentally, in the interests of his country.

The others are generally more discreet in their sense of moral and intellectual superiority, and about the necessary occasional resort to realpolitik —all matters that a gentleman keeps to himself and his peers in a democratic polity. Generally, not always. Dean Acheson's famous remark to the effect that he would not turn his back on Alger Hiss was pure provocation, explicable but not excusable only as an aberration caused by the enormous strain he was under at the time.

Even the ever loyal Harriman grumbled about it and pointed out that it made no sense—but then Harriman was patronized by his friends for his humorlessness and his literal-minded way of blurting things out. In private, however, never in public. In public he was a national monument almost from the beginning, and whatever he said was carefully chiseled in stone. In Paris, once, he reproved me fiercely for expressing disgust with Stalin's brutal murder of 15,000 captured Polish officers at Katyn. The problem was that we were chatting with a French journalist who had undertaken to publish his reminiscences about Yalta in a popular-history magazine. So Harriman insisted

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that I explain carefully that the sentiments expressed about Katyn were mine, not his, and before resuming our talk about Yalta he waited for the man to repeat what I had said in English, just to be sure that he had got it straight.

Afterward the Governor, as he liked to be called, explained to me that he didn't give a damn what I thought about Katyn, although it was really none of our business, but the Russians were extremely sensitive on this issue and it just wouldn't do for him to be quoted on it. Perhaps he was still hoping that the Russians would be helpful in loosening up the North Vietnamese. Or perhaps what he had in mind was the time that Kennan was declared *persona non grata* and barred from returning to his embassy in Moscow for comparing the Russians to the Nazis, which was indeed an impropriety on the part of a serving Ambassador, an unprofessional thing to do. Or both.

But, warming to his subject and becoming his usual urbane self, Harriman went on to explain that he, for one, saw no reason why we should concern ourselves with matters about which we could do nothing, in particular with the terrible things that Stalin had done, or was supposed to have done, to his own people. He suspected that these stories were exaggerated. Again, they were no business of ours. The important thing, in any case, was that Harriman's relations with Stalin and his successors had always been good, meaning useful, and there was no point in compromising them with loose talk about an atrocity that had happened—if indeed it had—twenty-five years ago.

Such anecdotes (but not the one I have just told) are legion in *The Wise Men*. They remind us again and again that nothing, not even nostalgia, as Simone Signoret said, is what it used to be. Not even change, the tempo and direction of which seem themselves (but inconstantly) to change. Can this be why we are increasingly nervous, suspicious, and ill-tempered with one another—not only on the traditional battlegrounds of domestic politics but beyond "the water's edge" where politics were supposed to stop?

The odd thing is that the principal legacy of the Wise Men, the so-called containment policy, has (among other things) produced an international situation considerably more hopeful and favorable to our interests than most of us could even have imagined during, say, the blockade of Berlin and the Korean war. We have not defused the implacable hostility of the Soviets, nor could we hope to, but we are approaching something like normal relations with China, one-fourth of the human race. Japan and Western Europe are still dependent upon us for their defense, but at least they have risen from the ashes; economically and culturally they enrich our lives. Most of Africa has gone downhill since decolonization, and so have the peoples of Indochina; but the free areas of Asia have done extremely well. South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore advertise the advantages of the market economy. The problems of the Middle East, Southern Africa, and Central America are intractable, but they are not—yet—problems that jeopardize our national existence.

Withal, I think it fair to say that we have rarely if ever been as divided and unhappy about our situation in the world as we are today. Is this a mirage, created by the latest scandal over the President's policies in Iran and Nicaragua? Alas, it is not a mirage. Just as at home we feel powerless to cope with the social pathologies that seem to increase with the affluence and productivity of society as a whole, abroad we cannot agree on how to define our national interest, much less on how to defend it. So we tend to think nostalgically of the Wise Men, whose departure from the scene coincided, more or less, with the denouement of Vietnam, the social upheavals of the 60's, and Watergate. In what measure are these the causes of our present distempers? To what extent are they the consequences of a profound sea-change that is transforming our country? These questions are important, to put it mildly, but rarely raised. Why? There never seems to be time, the media set the agenda, and our attention span keeps growing shorter. All we know is that even when things go better—in Spain, say, or El Salvador, or in international trade—we don't feel any better. Probably worse. Our vaunted system of checks and balances ends by paralyzing our institutions. The Congress can no more produce a budget than the President can conduct our foreign relations. Politics becomes a branch of criminology. And even—especially—among the guardians of the spirit, our journalists, pundits, clergymen, and professors, the level of civility keeps seeking new lows.

But what has all this to do with the Wise Men? That remains to be seen. Litanies of our troubles put me in mind of the poet who said, six centuries ago, that there is no greater pain than to recall a happy time when one is deep in dejection. Remembering the postwar period, however, would make us less miserable if we could learn something from it. Dean Acheson's Creation was not exactly an idyll, but it was indeed a happy time. The authors of *The Wise Men* give relatively little space to it, perhaps because the Korean affair was so much more dramatic. It was nevertheless a remarkable performance, a time when American foreign policy, the sword and forge as well as the shield of the Republic, rebuilt Western Europe and Japan and saved them for the West, preserved the independence of Greece, Iran, and South Korea, assured the common defense, and built a new international monetary and trading system, thus laying the basis for the series of

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"economic miracles" which raised living standards at a rate unprecedented in human history. Not that it was all our doing, to be sure; it was the work of what we were not ashamed in those days to call the free world, relative and various as its freedoms were and are.

So there was a moment of grace and things were done right for a change and those of us who were part of the effort in Europe remember it fondly. We few, we happy few. But so fleeting are our successes in this vale of tears that we can scarcely distinguish them sequentially from the usual *miseria*. Everything happens at once, or seems to in retrospect: the onset of the cold war can already be discerned in the mental reservations and *doubles-entendres* of Teheran, Yalta, and Potsdam; and the Marshall Plan was no sooner launched in Europe than the worst military disaster of our history loomed on the approaches to the Yalu, in northern Korea, while in this country the China Lobby and Senator McCarthy were busy (with the help of a mindless press) debasing a political language that was not in very good shape to begin with, so that when John Foster Dulles took over from Dean Acheson in 1952 it was scarcely even noticed that Dulles requested a "full field investigation" by the FBI, to ensure that there was nothing fishy in his own past. His statement or press release or whatever it was would have escaped me with all the hot air rising in the atmosphere, were it not for the fact that a French Deputy, Robert Buron, later a Minister under Pierre Mendès-France, clipped it from *Le Figaro* or *Le Monde* and waved it under my nose:

"*Ami* Kaplan, please explain *cette foutaise*, this nonsense."

"It's nothing, dear Buron. Routine stuff. . . . The Hiss case has shaken people up a bit."

"But what does it mean? The FBI are what? The police, no? Like our DGST?"

"Something like that."

"And the police, are they not responsible to Mr. Eisenhower's Interior Minister?"

"To the Attorney General, yes."

"And the Attorney General, who appoints him?"

"The President."

"He is therefore a member of the Cabinet?"

"Exactly."

"I see. . . . I see. . . . Then it does not surprise you that Mr. Eisenhower, in order to appoint his Foreign Minister, must first obtain the approval of the police?"

The incident stuck in my mind, a small signpost, one among many, on the upper reaches of a slippery slope. It could be that I remember it for some entirely extraneous reason—because of my interest in Buron, for example, a promising fellow who died prematurely. But this is neither here nor there. My point is merely that the euphoria of Dean Acheson's Creation was never unalloyed and that we had plenty of reasons to worry about the adequacy of our institutions, not to speak of the rhetoric we used to explain what we were about to "a candid world." Yet who better than Dulles, that very Christian gentleman, should have understood the importance of the Word?

The Wise Men, in any case, has little to tell us about how we reversed the divine process and fell from the Creation to the utter chaos that has overtaken the management of U.S. foreign policy since the political and moral debacle of Vietnam. In the third and final part of their book, Isaacson and Thomas give us a few glimpses of our protagonists observing the decline and fall from the sidelines, consulted very occasionally by Presidents of both parties and even asked to undertake special missions here and there; but the last time they reassembled briefly to act upon the center of power was, together with a handful of younger Wise Men like Cyrus Vance, Clark Clifford, Maxwell Taylor, and the Bundy brothers, at the behest of a despairing Lyndon Johnson, to urge him to swallow his bitter pill. It was on this occasion that they were "officially" designated as sages—an accolade that never goes without irony and least of all in a Washington seething with countercultural demonstrations and social change. After that they were really quite out of things, although Harriman remained indomitably active in his N Street headquarters in Georgetown, like the shadow foreign minister of a country that had ceased to exist.

Bohlen retired in 1969 and managed with the help of a ghostwriter to publish his *Witness to History*, but his health failed and by January 1, 1974, he was dead. Acheson intervened for the last time in the spring and summer of 1971, to help Henry Kissinger defeat the Mansfield Amendment, which called upon the President to withdraw our troops from Europe. He even roused McCloy and Lovett to put in a word, but there was no point speaking to Kennan—a man incapable, he said, of grasping the realities of power. Kennan kept to Princeton for the most part, writing his essays and books and denouncing what he saw as the inveterate militarization of containment, the doctrine he had been the first of the Wise Men to articulate in public. His face (when I caught sight of him once or twice in New York) had already acquired its "eternal look," to paraphrase Mallarmé's famous line. He had taken a dim view of NATO from the beginning, and even suggested in his Reith Lectures of 1957 that Europe should dispense with any formal system of defense; and it was this sort of thing that led Acheson, more in anger than in sorrow, to label him a "mystic." But Kennan was always, for his own reasons, quite as fiercely opposed as Acheson was to any congressional encroachment on the President's preeminent right and duty to manage foreign affairs. In this respect the six were one.

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By the 70's, of course, to speak of encroachment was to understate the case. With the Presidency enfeebled by Watergate and our armed forces still mired in Vietnam, the Congress moved to take control. In practice this meant preventing the executive branch from doing things that the Congress is obviously incapable of doing itself, and the results were plain: a sort of constant partisan warfare at home, and confusion, dismay, and distrust of our purposes abroad; four Presidencies destroyed by foreign-policy failures in twenty years and—despite enormous expenditures—a shield of the Republic that cannot prevent our most implacable adversary from establishing a foothold on the American mainland. Vietnam was costly, but the "syndrome" it left us threatens to cost a lot more. And so Tocqueville's often-quoted observation, to the effect that democracy and a coherent foreign policy were incompatible, seemed—and seems—to be as true in the 1980's as when Tocqueville was Foreign Minister of a Republican France.

Sorry about the Tocqueville. The daring thought had crossed my mind that one might, just this once, discuss a bit of American history without mentioning that illustrious man. But he comes to mind, and to my mind's eye in the Daumier caricature, surveying our shambles serenely in his funereal black frock coat, as if to say, I told you so. A deeper man, and more given to philosophical reflection than all our Wise Men put together; and yet his situation was very much like theirs: an aristocrat in the service of a society that was evolving toward democracy; and he lived, moreover, where their roots were, in the 19th-century "concert of nations," as it was hopefully called, a shifting equilibrium of nation-states, parliamentary at home, imperialist abroad. This was the Metropole, the world's center, whence power and culture, civilization and its discontents, radiated outward toward the great continental land masses which—and Tocqueville foresaw this, too—would contend for hegemony one day.

The Wise Men were all American, of course, born and bred, but Acheson's father was English; Bohlen and McCloy (through his wife) had upper-class German relatives; Kennan's father was named Kossuth, after the Hungarian national hero, and he had a great uncle also named George Kennan who was famous in Russia for having written a book about the Siberian penal system. (The official purpose of Tocqueville's mission to the United States in 1830, curiously enough, was to study American penitentiaries.) And finally Harriman, who was so often in Europe during his boyhood and youth, married an English aristocrat after his second wife died. Only Lovett, born of a Texas judge turned railroad tycoon and a Southern belle, had no direct European connections, if memory serves. But the point remains: they were all brought up in a Europe-centered world.

Tocqueville lived only until 1859, a short life compared to that of our protagonists but long enough to span the distance between the *ancien régime*, the world of his fathers, and the democratizing society of post-revolutionary France. Our heroes, as we have seen, lived on and on, spanning the distance between the "concert of nations" and the cacophony we live in today. Of these two trajectories, as one realizes in rereading Tocqueville's *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution*, the second is not only longer than the first, it covers a far more radical transformation of society, of international relations, of the way we think about ourselves and the world.

It is here, it seems to me, that we should look for clues, beyond Vietnam, Watergate, and the encroachments of the Congress on presidential turf, to our present situation. My children are scarcely aware of it, my grandchildren not at all, but we too had an *ancien régime*. Young Harriman, sailing along the Pacific coast of imperial Russia in his imperial father's yacht, went ashore without a visa. He told Stalin about it, some fifty years later, and the dictator growled: "You wouldn't be able to do that today." Just so. Not even in a civilian aircraft, inadvertently, at 20,000 feet. The efficiency of Oriental despotism has taken a great leap forward. But the changes in our own society, even if they seem less dramatic, for lack of famines, purges, and foreign invasions, may actually have been more profound.

In *The Wise Men* we are scarcely aware of this, perhaps because the authors are too close to it, or because they were born too late. But in the valedictory pages we do catch sight of old Acheson, courted by a youthful President but dismayed by the media glitter and hype that Kennedy seems to substitute for substance in our foreign affairs. In Cuba we come within a hair's breadth of Armageddon, and the upshot—unanimously proclaimed a famous victory—is that a Soviet base is firmly solidified ninety miles off the Florida coast. In Laos, Harriman is made to conduct a negotiation so long and tedious that everyone forgets about it, and the upshot—also proclaimed a famous victory—is that South Vietnam will become undefendable, once and for all. In the White House, filled with vigorous young touch-football players, McGeorge Bundy picks up the ball and runs with it, while Dean Rusk sits on the bench. Asked what he would do if he were back as Secretary of State, Acheson—Bundy's adopted uncle—says: "Resign!" A few years later we hear him, a lifelong Democrat, roaring at Nixon: "You are the President! Tell them [meaning the Congress] to go to hell!"

And so it goes. Even our alleged successes, détente, the opening to China, Camp David, seem more like media spectaculars, feats of endurance or of derring-do, than the fruits of an enduring and deliberate national policy. During the Carter

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administration we find Lovett making sour remarks (as did Harriman) about Zbigniew Brzezinski, deploring that we have a National Security Adviser who is not a native American. Yet Kissinger, perhaps because he served a Republican President, seemed to irritate Lovett less. More to our point, he mutters that "we now have 535 Secretaries of State," a phrase I had thought I had coined. We all begin to feel anachronistic in the fullness of time. But these snapshots and obiter dicta are merely signs along the way. What I have been getting at is that the *ancien régime* from which our Wise Men come to us across the decades—decades of enormous social and technological change—has been replaced by something new and essentially different, and that this has consequences (with which we have not yet even begun to come to terms) for the conduct of our foreign affairs.

SINCE the die is cast and I have uttered the inevitable name, I might as well go ahead and confess that Tocqueville often reminds me of the only Wise Man who could qualify as a card-carrying intellectual, George Kennan, a man of delicate sensibilities and erratic opinions—and one who might have done for Americans what Tocqueville did for his countrymen: provide some historical perspective in a period of turbulence and change. Is it too late, even now? Kennan is a distinguished historian, after all, and only eighty-two. The trouble, joking aside, is that he lacks (among other things) an elementary sympathy for this country in its present configuration, the spectacle of it appalls him, as he keeps telling us in his memoirs; and without a modicum of love, what wisdom can he bring? The very opposite, in this respect, of the Frenchman, whose distress at the decadence of his class and the confusion of his people only served to sharpen his insight.

L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution was published in 1856. It was an enormous success, although one wonders whether it consoled its author for what he saw as his failure as a political leader and statesman. Louis-Napoléon had by then put paid to the Second Republic, and Tocqueville was out of a job (as Kennan was after his mission to Belgrade in 1961) and unhappy over the unwillingness of his compatriots to defend their freedom. So he decided, as he wrote to his friend Kergolay, that his "true valor was in works of the mind." And indeed it was. His talent as a writer and thinker, his way of lifting issues out of their immediate political context and seeing them historically, sociologically, in the broad sweep of things, was of little use to him as a man of affairs. Possibly it was a hindrance, although the French are notoriously more tolerant of literary talent than we are. Kennan's elegant prose often struck his colleagues as convoluted and obscure. But in *L'Ancien Régime* Tocqueville's intelligence and grace shine forth, illuminating the old society and the new with the play of light that each casts on the other, so that argument and method are fused together and we are left with a sense of continuity rather than of rupture; of how much of the Revolution had already taken place in the depths of the country long before the events of 1789.

Now this, it seems to me, is the sort of thing we could make good use of. We need to understand how we got from there to here. It is not enough to say that the ruckus through which we are currently going, like the foreign-policy uproars that drove our last four Presidents from office, is simply a function of failure. Let the President produce a success or two, so goes the refrain, and the Congress will get off his back; a typical public-relations formula, and a dangerous one, since it induces political leaders to act at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons. It's a tough world out there, to coin a phrase, filled with intractable problems, and a foreign policy, as distinct from specific projects and undertakings, should be designed for the long haul, which means that there will inevitably be mistakes and miscalculations along the way. One blushes to repeat such banalities, but only this morning I heard a Congressman solemnly opine that the *contras* had better produce a victory this year or they would get no further help from *him*. This reminded me that in 1965, when I was in Vietnam with Maxwell Taylor, theorist of the graduated response, the Communists were into the twentieth year of their effort to conquer Indochina; and they are still fighting along the Thai border in 1987.

The Wise Men were the last generation to operate from what seemed to be a firm institutional and customary base. In fact, as we now know, the system only barely held together to sustain Dean Acheson's Creation, and it was badly battered in the 50's by the demagogy of Senator McCarthy, the insubordination of General MacArthur, and the cowardice of John Foster Dulles—precisely the sort of human orneriness and weakness that such a system should be designed to withstand. Oddly enough, it was during the riotous 60's, with John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, that the imperial Presidency reached, or appeared to reach, the apogee of its power, but not for long. The Congress inevitably took on the coloration of its time, only more so, as it were, judging from the national elections. Then came Watergate and the War Powers Act and neither Jimmy Carter nor Ronald Reagan was able, nor did they seriously try, to put things together again.

So much, once more, for what everyone knows —but does all this not suggest an appropriate theme on which to conclude our rumination on these long and eventful careers? Should we not look back beyond the day's headlines, important as they may be, to the country from which the Wise Men came, and try to understand what has

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happened and is happening to us as a people? This is easier said than done, to be sure, and not to be done—even by a Tocqueville—at a single stroke. Something more like a sociology of our foreign policy is what I have in mind. For all I know the work may be under way, here and elsewhere, unless necessity has ceased to be the mother of invention. We have become a problem, not only to ourselves but to an increasingly anxious world; and the problem of the problem, as always, is how to define it.

In Europe, the last time I was there, I was impressed by the place we now occupy in the popular imagination, by the detailed attention that the media devote to our troubles, indeed to our national life in all its aspects; and by the extraordinary development that is being given to what the Germans call *Amerikanistik*, the academic study of the United States, the feeble beginnings of which I witnessed some forty-odd years ago when I was invited to Strasbourg to lecture to a group of English teachers. There it was called *Études américaines*, the Germans having just been driven out; and all the teachers spoke English of a sort, with English accents. Over the years, as America moved from the periphery to the center of their preoccupations, the Europeans have broadened and deepened their studies and improved their accents, so that I am no longer surprised to encounter candidates for the *baccalauréat*, the *Matura*, or some such exam speaking impeccable American and plying me with questions that I cannot answer. Not about our latest scandals in Washington, of course. On that sort of thing we are all *incollables*, as the French say, meaning that we know it all, simultaneously, on both sides of the Atlantic. It's when they get into the 19th century that they stump me.

Nevertheless, and this brings me back to the Tocquevillean trajectory *from there to here*, I am close enough to the generation of the Wise Men to remember a time when we were still a nation-state of the type invented in Europe and developed in purest form by France and England, but also—like variations on a theme—by just about every European country. Obviously, we were a rather special variation, for a host of reasons, and not least because our Founding Fathers perceived a permanent threat to our liberties in the power of a central government; and during the first century of our existence as a nation, while the Europeans were experiencing a paroxysm of centralization and nationalism, the American federal government (even though we had fought a bloody civil war to preserve the principle of the Union) remained remarkably weak and inactive. The country was largely and variously Christian, but there was no national church. Public education was vigorously developed, but there was no national educational system. The standing army was minuscule, short on rations, and kept out of sight. And of course there was nothing resembling a national police. Institutions and appurtenances that elsewhere were deemed essential as embodiments of the national will and expressions of the national soul were lacking, and nobody seemed to mind.

Still, we were a nation, in form at least like the others, despite the great empty spaces to the West—except that something extraordinary was happening: between the middle of the century and World War I tens of millions of new people arrived, mostly Southern and Eastern Europeans and Irish, doubling the population. These people were quickly and effectively Americanized, but in the process they were changing the character of the country, enormously expanding the economy, informing the popular culture with their own, and moving into positions of political power. And all this, curiously, was done without challenging the Wasp Ascendancy in its representative roles. By common consent its members alone, with rare exceptions, held national office, manned our pulpits, taught our young, and represented the nation abroad, so that—as late as the post-war years—it still seemed only slightly odd, just a bit old-fashioned, that General de Gaulle should refer to us, as he habitually did, as "Anglo-Saxons."

What I am saying, and surely it is nothing new, is simply that the *nation* was one thing, our *ancien régime*, a variant of the European nation-state with a relatively homogeneous population, language, religion, and culture; and the *country* was quite another. Until World War II, the country had little interest in the outside world, and what interest it had (e.g., family and cultural ties) was somehow suspect, in violation of the common consent mentioned above, indicating that the Americanization process had not been properly completed. Between the two wars only a negligible part of the economy—5 percent or less of the national product—was involved in foreign trade. Wall Street, to be sure, was in contact with the financial markets abroad, but the great investment-banking firms and their lawyers belonged to the nation, the *ancien régime*, and their personnel came from the Wasp Ascendancy, now leavened with a sprinkling of "Our Crowd" Jews.

Small wonder, then, that we should have had a tiny Whitehall or mini-Quai d'Orsay on Pennsylvania Avenue: Old State, with its rolltop desks and revolving ceiling fans and black servants and courteous soft-spoken gentlemen in celluloid collars. Here, sheltered by the department but administered separately, was the headquarters of the Foreign Service, a corps of perhaps a hundred officers, perhaps two, which Kennan and Bohlen joined in 1924. When Acheson was Under Secretary, a couple of decades later, he knew or at least—through his work with the promotion panels—knew of, practically every member of the corps.

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THE old Foreign Service was a comically snobbish outfit in the 20's and 30's, legendary for its eccentricities. It was not hostile to talent, however, or to certain varieties of learning and practical wisdom, so that Bohlen and Kennan, for example, were nurtured in their Russian studies by a remarkable section chief who assembled one of the best collections of books and documents on Russia to be found outside of Moscow—a collection to be dispersed and destroyed on mysterious orders from above at a time and under circumstances that led Kennan darkly to suspect the hand of a Soviet agent. But the permutations of the Foreign Service, picturesque as they sometimes were, need not concern us here. Suffice it to say that it was not simply swept away by the huge expansion of our overseas services after World War II. The latter were staffed by outsiders, reserve officers as they were called, and although the Foreign Service proper was moderately and grudgingly "democratized," it remained a relatively small elite corps, about 1,400 members, if memory serves, when I went to Vietnam as Embassy Counselor in 1965. My point is that it assimilated people like me very slowly, and that even as the Wasp Ascendancy relinquished exclusive control, the corps continued to represent the *ancien régime*. Its business was diplomacy, not policy, although it had once exerted a powerful influence on the latter, which was defined and formulated by the Secretary of State. The Secretary, of course, served at the pleasure of the President, and it was he who was responsible for training, assigning, and instructing the diplomats and consular agents and receiving their reports from the field. The U.S. Constitution provides that the President shall conduct our foreign relations and this, in a traditional nation-state, is the way it is normally done.

Now what has happened? The *ancien régime* has not been drowned in blood or even entirely pushed aside, but its representatives have lost their monopoly, not only in diplomacy but in just about every function they used to perform. In itself this is (for me, at least) an interesting if unsurprising bit of social history. But the important thing for our purposes is that while the old nation-state was losing much of its moral and cultural influence and practically all of its political power, the country, i.e., what Tocqueville called the "new society," was moving massively (and this time I think permanently) into foreign affairs, a field which in the past had engaged its interest only in times of crisis and war. This has not happened all at once, as a result of a single crisis like the struggle over the ratification of the Versailles Treaty after World War I, but increasingly because the country as a whole has become *interested* in our international economic relations and, besides, sees itself in a permanent state of crisis, drafted to fight in jungles, threatened by nuclear annihilation, hijacked over the Mediterranean, moved by famine in Africa, and all in living color on a television screen. Even the most technical and boring aspects of foreign affairs, involving trade and monetary matters, are now seen as of deep and immediate concern to the entire country, as indeed they are. The Congress, reflecting this concern, has a huge gallery to play to, and the spectators come every day. The stakes are high, and they rise with the anxiety level. Questions of foreign policy have come to loom large not only in presidential elections but in state and local contests as well.

FROM the viewpoint of the Old Guard, in which alas I must include myself, this new situation would be problematical under the best of circumstances, requiring institutional and psychological adjustments that we never get around to making—because we are in crisis, precisely, and it is always more urgent that something be done about Nicaragua, say, than about our way of thinking or about the bureaucratic machinery, both of which are resistant to change. Nor can the America that I have called the country, the turbulent, volatile, excited, and exciting society that has supplanted our *ancien régime*, be said to offer the best of circumstances. If anything, it offers the worst. It comes center stage as a vast conglomeration of discrete if not discordant interests, economic, ethnic, cultural, technological, religious. It encompasses not only an entire continent but places that the *ancien régime* had barely heard of: Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico. It exercises an odd, ambiguous, and de-facto protectorate over Israel. Its financial centers and marketplaces are global in scope, its borders are uncontrolled, perhaps uncontrollable, and the populations that pour in are largely Asian and Hispanic, vastly different from the settlers who peopled the old society. And yet the forms, the juridical structures, and the memories of the latter subsist, struggling to perform some of the old functions, maintain some of their character, under the deluge of different folkways, languages, religions, which cannot even be called alien any more.

In short, we have become something quite unprecedented: a world-country, a great magnetic center for the aspirations, ambitions, talents, and troubles of peoples everywhere; and this, surely, is why our language and popular culture, our ways of dressing, consuming, and amusing ourselves, exert such a powerful and pervasive influence in every corner of the earth.

Do I overstate the case? Perhaps. But one need only compare our situation with that of the nation-states of Europe to understand that Tocqueville, in his strictures about the inability of democracies to sustain a coherent foreign policy, had America specifically in mind, as if he could already foresee what we would become. The new society that he saw emerging in France from the *ancien régime* was also to be democratic, and subject to the dif-

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ficulties and discontents inherent in political freedom. But France was an old country and a settled civilization long before it became a parliamentary democracy; and the French, while preferring on the whole to manage their affairs in a democratic manner, had never *defined themselves* in terms of one system or another. Regimes came and went, the people remained, and the country—given its geography, its history, human nature, and the way the world worked—had certain permanent needs and interests which any French government would, as a matter of course, look after. So, in the absence of war or some other extremity, the French were normally willing to entrust the details and the machinery of foreign affairs to a ministry which formulated general principles and a corps of specialists (the names recur from generation to generation) who were bred and trained to do this sort of thing: "honest men," said an 18th-century English wag, "who lie abroad for their country."

The case, once again, may seem overstated. Obviously, the nation-states of Western Europe have emerged vastly changed from the extraordinary turbulence of this century. But the fact remains that these changes have occurred in relatively homogeneous collectivities with long ancestral memories, so that the continuity that Tocqueville discerned in the passage from the old regime to the new society is still much in evidence in Europe—while it is fading almost from sight over here.

And so? It has long been customary in Europe to smile at the old American belief that for every problem there is a solution. This is supposed to prove that we lack a tragic sense of life. Actually it is an article of faith, one among many that we have inherited from our *ancien régime*. We also believe that the genius of the federal Constitution, providing we read it correctly, will preserve the Republic. And thus far it has not failed us. The Constitution provides that our foreign relations shall be conducted by the President of the United States, who is elected by the entire people. It also gives the other branches of the federal government the power, under certain circumstances, to limit and frustrate presidential action.

The Wise Men were able to do their work in accordance with this delphic writ because the prestige of the old society was still largely intact. Mistakes and stupidities would occur, since it was human to err. And worse. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, long before Richard Nixon, repeatedly violated the law, the Neutrality Act in particular, not to mention the so-called relocation of the Japanese Americans, a barbaric act. Dean Acheson resigned from his first government post, at Treasury, because the President demanded that he commit an illegality, although this was only the proximate cause. In the days of the nation-state this sort of thing was called *Staatsräson* or *raison d'état*, terms that cannot easily be translated into contemporary American. In any event, providence had allowed us a considerable margin for error, and so endowed us geographically, economically, etc. that we could and did recover from idiocies and turpitudes, great and small. Only, recovery has become progressively more difficult, for obvious reasons. The price we pay keeps going up.

There is a Congressman from Brooklyn who has boned up on the situation in Manila. He negotiates with the Filipino guerrillas and sends fan mail to the Nicaraguan *comandantes*. The Congressman from South Boston worries about Ulster, and another from Chicago about the plight of the Poles. This is already an old story: it was the Captive Nations lobby that led to Kennan's retirement from the Foreign Service in 1961. Cannot institutional arrangements be devised to allay the anxieties of these people, appease their ambitions, and even take account of their counsel without preventing the President from doing his job? Perhaps. But no such arrangements can help when there is no stable majority in the Congress to support the President on substantive issues, like what (if anything) to do about Nicaragua. In the days of the *ancien régime*, this was rarely a factor—and then only episodically. Since *la Révolution*, it has become the core of the matter. The Congress cannot conduct a foreign policy of its own, although it sometimes tries to do so. It can, however, obstruct presidential action and communicate to our friends and foes abroad that the President's position may represent something less than the national will. And once the national will is up for grabs it makes sense for the abovementioned friends and foes to maintain well-heeled lobbies in Washington, and even go out into the country and work the crowds. Clearly all this is not conducive to the orderly conduct of foreign relations, although it does rather spice our political life. The trouble is that at certain junctures it may become dangerous to our health.

What it all means, I would suggest, is that, when the Wise Men left us, something considerable had already come to an end. There will be no more grand designs or Creations in the foreseeable future, except on those rare occasions when the President and the Congress can not only agree but sustain their agreement over a substantial period. This is not unthinkable. It does happen even now on issues like trade, air traffic, and international postal regulations. That it was already difficult to do on the big ones during the postwar period helps explain one of the least attractive legacies of that time: a national tendency to apocalyptic rhetoric, an inability to modulate, as it were, since nothing could be sold to the Congress without shamelessly manipulating the media

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(which of course love nothing better) and threatening extreme consequences on each and every occasion.

If our institutions are blocked, they can only be unblocked politically—either by an electoral realignment which is unlikely to last, if it ever happens, or by a new version of what I have called the common consent. This, of course, would no longer be a tacit agreement to entrust our foreign policy to a specific social group or class, but rather an explicit arrangement, the rough model of which already exists in the relationship between the Director of the CIA (representing the President) and the Senate Intelligence Committee. To build something solid on such a model, however, would require not only the political will to do so but discipline, which the President has the power, at least, to impose on his staff. Whether the Congress can do likewise—and, to begin with, whether it will wish to—remains to be seen.

One thing is clear: the old bipartisanship based on nothing more than moral suasion and personal relations cannot be made to work under present conditions. Henry Kissinger made a noble try in Central America, but who remembers his Commission's report? It is a weighty piece of work—and I once heard him propose to bomb the Sandinistas with it, an excellent idea, if Americans were but ruthless enough to do such a thing. In the meantime, we are condemned to a certain minimalism, and perhaps this is all to the good. If we cannot learn to behave minimally with respect to hostages, not to speak of the importation of Italian shoes, how shall we act maximally when our national existence is at stake? The meantime, however, is a relative notion, and given the variety of our interests, hopes, and fears, it cannot be expected to last very long. More likely, while we ponder the difference between paralysis and restraint, something dire will happen to concentrate our minds.

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Pol Pot in Retrospect

Arch Puddington

THAT the Khmer Rouge committed some of the most despicable crimes against humanity of the modern age is today almost universally acknowledged. An official of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has gone so far as to call the Cambodian atrocities "the most serious that had occurred in the world since Nazism" and "nothing less than autogenocide." The very concept of autogenocide—the attempted obliteration of entire classes of one's own people—was born out of the Cambodian experience. Yet in contrast to earlier cases of mass murder, the motives and ideology which spawned the Cambodian reign of terror are but dimly understood, even now, eight years after Pol Pot and his accomplices were driven from power in the first shooting war between Communist states. Although the actions of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao at times seemed irrational or mad, the driving force behind their specific policies could be grasped by the outside world, whether race hatred, fear of an independent peasantry, or apprehension over potential rivals. But where Cambodia is concerned, many would be hard-pressed to identify the combination of circumstances, personalities, and ideas which led to what in fewer than four years may proportionately have been the worst bloodbath of the 20th century.

There are a number of reasons for the gaps in our knowledge about Cambodia, not the least of which was the country's extreme isolation during the Khmer Rouge period. Democratic Kampuchea, as Cambodia was renamed after the Khmer Rouge victory in April 1975, was almost inaccessible to the outside world. Foreign journalists, even those from other Communist nations, were unwelcome, and foreigners unfortunate enough to stray onto Cambodian territory were invariably tortured and executed, usually after "confessing" to service in one or several foreign-intelligence agencies. Thus, whatever information reached beyond Cambodia's borders had to be supplied by refugees, most of whom were located in camps along the Thailand-Cambodia border. It was these refugees' stories, told to reporters like Henry Kamm of the New York *Times*, which alerted the world to the unfolding tragedy.

Those early accounts of killing, starvation, and slave labor made somewhat less impact than might have been expected, given the horrifying nature of the refugees' experiences. As we now know, the refugee accounts were highly accurate; if anything, they understated the dimensions of the terror. Yet many in the United States and other democratic countries viewed the refugee stories with indifference, extreme caution, or even outright skepticism. Although these attitudes cut across ideological lines, they were most frequently encountered on the antiwar Left, those who had desired a Khmer Rouge victory or, at a minimum, preferred a Communist triumph to the prolongation of U.S. involvement in Indochina.

In a few cases, antiwar partisans attacked the credibility of the refugees or hinted that charges of Khmer Rouge human-rights violations were part of a CIA-inspired disinformation campaign. For example, in May 1977—over two years after the fall of Phnom Penh—the Washington-based Indochina Resource Center, one of the most influential antiwar organizations, wrote to William Shawcross, who was then working on a book about U.S. policy toward Cambodia, asking for information concerning "CIA-operated radio stations designed to spread 'disinformation'—especially in regard to Cambodia." The Center also asked for material on CIA "debriefing of Cambodian refugees." More often, however, antiwar veterans simply ignored the news from Cambodia.

A set of similar attitudes complicated the response of those best-equipped to interpret developments inside Cambodia—the reporters and scholars who had worked there prior to the war's end. Reporters based in Phnom Penh were familiar with accounts of atrocities against civilians committed by the Communists *during* the civil war. They had also heard reports from defectors that the Khmer Rouge were organizing the "liberated zones" along rigidly totalitarian lines. This news was not suppressed; there were a number of stories in major Western newspapers which hinted at the brutal nature of Cambodian Communism. But since the prevailing disposition among the press corps was acute hostility to the war conduct of the United States, it was gen-

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erally assumed that conditions would improve once "Cambodians ruled Cambodia." Revulsion against American policy grew so powerful as to evoke a curiously relativist attitude among some reporters toward the draconian measures associated with the evacuation of Phnom Penh during the first weeks of Communist rule. Genuinely appalled by Khmer Rouge inhumanity, reporters like Sydney Schanberg of the New York *Times* nevertheless pointedly refused to cast judgment on the new regime.

Still, the performance of the press was infinitely more honest than that of the small community of Western academics—mostly Americans and Australians—who specialized in Cambodian history and culture. In their approach to the Indochina war, these scholars were firm believers in academic "concern" or "engagement," euphemisms for outright partisanship. When the news filtering out of Cambodia challenged their assumptions about the salutary effects of revolution, these specialists developed intricate theories to refute or rationalize the mountain of evidence of a bloodbath. Eventually, the evidence became too overwhelming to deny; thus the pathetic admission by an Australian scholar, Gavin McCormick, that

> The Kampuchean question is shrouded in a dense fog of prejudices, distortion, propaganda, and half-truth. But, and here is a tragic irony, it becomes increasingly likely that some of the most malicious fantasies of propagandists, conceived with little or no regard for truth, may actually be close to the truth. This is a difficult and unpalatable conclusion.

McCormick is admittedly an extreme case; yet others, while conceding the accuracy of the refugee stories, have argued that terror was not inherent in Cambodian Communism, but was caused by a few excessively brutal regional leaders. Or, alternatively, that responsibility ultimately rested with the United States, whose bombing policies and support for Lon Nol lengthened the war, thus contributing to the demise of various "moderate" Khmer Rouge leaders.*

But as Elizabeth Becker concludes in her new and extremely valuable history of postwar Cambodia,† ideology—Communist ideology taken to its most insane extremes—was crucial in determining the course of events in Democratic Kampuchea. A former reporter for the Washington *Post*, Miss Becker was based in Phnom Penh during the war and was subsequently one of three Western journalists and scholars invited to tour Cambodia in the waning days of Pol Pot's regime. As a war correspondent, she shared the predominant revulsion against America's role in Cambodia and even today places partial responsibility on America (and Vietnam) for the Cambodian tragedy. Subsequently, while voicing dismay at the direction of the Cambodian revolution, she dismissed the first book-length account of the tragedy, *Murder of a Gentle Land* by John Barron and Anthony Paul (1977), as "a cold-war propaganda piece" and derided the authors' conclusion that the horrible fate of the Cambodian people resulted from "the tyranny of Communism." In fact, the account of Cambodia in the period immediately after the fall of Phnom Penh laid out by Barron and Paul has stood the test of time, an assessment reinforced by Miss Becker's own analysis of the factors which produced the Khmer Rouge genocide.

Her emphasis on the specifically Communist nature of the Khmer Rouge is especially important because so much scholarly and journalistic treatment of the period evades or clouds the question of Pol Pot's ideology (for example, a description of the Khmer Rouge as "anarchists" in a major British tabloid). Pol Pot, it is true, diverged from traditional Communist practice in several important respects. Moreover, the Khmer Rouge gained power at a time when most other Communist regimes, having long since crushed internal resistance, had abandoned the use of mass, naked terror, thus contributing to the impression that the Cambodian situation was something of an aberration. Nevertheless, the fact is that the history of Communism provides numerous precedents for Khmer Rouge policies, including the most inhumane. What differentiated the Khmer Rouge from the rest of the Communist world was the zeal with which these policies were prosecuted.

As Miss Becker reminds us, the upper echelons of Khmer Rouge officials were not drawn to Communism under isolated circumstances in their native land, but as students in Paris during the early 1950's. Saloth Sar (later to adopt the *nom de guerre* Pol Pot), Ieng Sary, and Khieu Samphan were among a generation of Paris-educated students who were later to form the inner nucleus of Cambodian Communism. Their first political mentors were members of the French Communist party, then as now one of the most dogmatically pro-Soviet parties in the non-Communist world.

It should be remembered that Stalin—and Stalinism—were very much alive at the time. This was a period when party purges were being carried out throughout Eastern Europe, and

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* Although the writings of Cambodian specialists do not reach a wide audience, their research has provided a scholarly veneer for journalists and more popular writers. Noam Chomsky, for one, has frequently cited the research of one of the most important Cambodian authorities, Ben Kiernan, to buttress his argument that mass murder did not take place in Cambodia. Kiernan eventually changed his mind; Chomsky, to my knowledge, never has.

† *When the War Was Over*, Simon & Schuster, 502 pp., $19.95.

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purges, with considerably less serious consequences for the victims, were also being conducted in Western Communist parties, including that of France. And to the anti-colonialism and nationalism which came naturally to the Cambodians, whose country was then under French domination, was added a virulent strain of anti-Americanism, then *de rigueur* on the French Left. Paradoxically, the example of Yugoslavia, which had only recently broken away from the Soviet camp, may also have left its impression on the Cambodians. Saloth Sar apparently worked briefly in a Yugoslavian labor brigade, and it is no mere idle speculation to suggest that the Cambodians may have drawn parallels between Tito's Yugoslavia—a small Communist state fending off the imperialist designs of a Communist superpower—and Cambodia's later situation vis-à-vis Vietnam.

Another important influence was Maoism. The Cambodians admired the Chinese for their independence, their emphasis on youth, their revolutionary purity, and their willingness to undertake ambitious, and risky, experiments to move the revolution forward. Not surprisingly, the Maoist projects which provided the greatest inspiration for the Khmer Rouge were the two greatest calamities: the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

The Khmer Rouge, in other words, took ideology with the utmost seriousness. In the hands of Pol Pot, Communist dogma became a lethal weapon, supplying justification for monstrous crimes committed in the name of economic development, independence, and national sovereignty. The Khmer Rouge may not have set out to cause the deaths of between one and two million Cambodians, but their plans for the drastic reshaping of Khmer society preordained such an outcome. As Khieu Samphan reportedly told Zhou Enlai, the Khmer Rouge intended to do what no previous Communist regime had achieved: "Our country's place in history will be assured. We will be the first nation to build a completely Communist society without wasting time on intermediate steps."

Pol Pot was well aware of what this grandiose program implied for the Cambodian people. In addition to their study of Stalin and Mao, the Khmer Rouge, as noted earlier, had tested out their theories in the areas they controlled during the civil war. Cities and towns were emptied, and whole villages relocated. Other features of life behind Khmer Rouge lines included reeducation camps, the execution of dissenters, religious persecution, and the transformation of agricultural work into a form of prison-camp labor.

One major difference between Cambodian Communism and more traditional systems was the stress on agriculture. Although the Communist blueprint for Cambodian development called for a program of crash industrialization, in practice industrial expansion was ignored by the leadership. In fact, those who had been industrial workers in the old society were perceived not as part of the revolutionary vanguard but as urban exploiters who enriched themselves off the sweat of the peasantry.

The Khmer Rouge were also fanatically opposed to the institution of private property, an attitude which helps account for the otherwise mysterious evacuation of the capital. Certainly the Khmer Rouge detested city life for its corruption and parasitism, but they also believed that the very existence of a traditional urban society stood as an insurmountable obstacle to the abolition of private property. The Communists were quite candid on this score: "If we had kept Phnom Penh, [private property] would have had much strength. . . . We were stronger, had more influence than the private sector when we were in the countryside. But in Phnom Penh we would have become their [the capitalists'] satellite. However, we did not keep Phnom Penh, and private property has no power." This is another way of saying what numerous Communist theorists, from Lenin on down, have admitted: Communism or state socialism cannot prevail over capitalism under normal conditions; if Communism is to succeed, capitalism, inherently the stronger system, must be repressed, and its reemergence prevented at all costs.

Much as the Soviet Union relied on crash industrialization as the foundation of economic modernization, Pol Pot envisioned the modernization of the Cambodian economy through the massive expansion of agricultural production. He confidently predicted that Democratic Kampuchea would join the ranks of the advanced industrialized nations within fifteen or twenty years, and would furthermore achieve this ambitious goal without foreign assistance. Pol Pot was blunt about the source of capital for this monumental project: "Our capital comes essentially from the work of our people. . . . We also have another source of capital. That is the fact that we have no salary. The absence of salary constitutes in itself a great source of capital."

This was indeed a breathtaking admission. Stalin, of course, had made widespread use of slave labor in the construction of canals, hydroelectric projects, and other public-works enterprises. But the Soviets have always denied that the prisoner population constituted a crucial element in their economic strategy. Pol Pot, by contrast, turned Cambodia into one huge collective farm, whose workers, though nominally free, had the status of military penal-colony inmates. Failure to work was treated as desertion, and punished accordingly. Peasants were forbidden to maintain a private plot for family consumption. In some of the more harshly controlled regions, peasants were executed if caught foraging

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for food. And as Miss Becker points out, while the Khmer Rouge in theory elevated the peasants to the exalted status of revolutionary vanguard, in reality they retained the age-old contempt of the urban elite for the ways of the countryside, believing that peasants would work hard only if force and terror were employed. Thionn Prasith, a foreign-ministry official, exemplified this attitude: "In the former society, peasants worked only three or four months a year. . . . Now with the cooperatives we have organized them so they can work all year 'round. . . . In the old society, the wife stayed home and only the husband worked. Now everybody works. . . . Especially the young girls and boys who only danced and ate in the old society."

THUS the Communists set out to smash every institution, every aspect of Cambodian society which in any way drew the peasant's attention and energy from the rice harvest. Organized religion was destroyed. Where Cambodia had between 60,000 and 80,000 Buddhist monks during the civil war, there are now fewer than 1,000 who perform their religious function. The rest were killed, forced to marry or bear arms (making them ineligible for the priesthood), or simply disappeared. Temples were torn down or turned into prisons. Praying within the family was strictly forbidden; those who disobeyed were subject to execution.

Even more insidious was the Khmer Rouge effort to destroy the family and to regulate sexual relations, marriage, and the raising of children. The transformation of the most intimate personal relations and the destruction of centuries-old Khmer traditions did not occur haphazardly; nor was this the result of the chaotic degeneration of the revolution. As Molyda Szymusiak, a survivor of the Khmer Rouge period, testifies,* the war against traditional family relations began with the evacuation of Phnom Penh. Twelve years old at the time, Molyda recalls the imposition of a new language as one of the very first changes under Communism. On the basis of orders issued by sixteen- or eighteen-year-old Khmer Rouge soldiers, Cambodians were deprived of their names; no longer were they permitted to use family names. They were assigned new, often monosyllabic names and were instructed not to address one another any longer as father, aunt, or daughter, but rather as *met*, or comrade. Molyda and other children were also closely interrogated by party cadres, intent on discovering incriminating evidence about a family's class background. Molyda, for example, was asked her father's occupation, whether her family owned property, whether she could read or write. The wrong answer could mean a death sentence for her father, and possibly the entire family.

She also learned, early on, the dangers of sexual relations between unmarried men and women. The Khmer Rouge gave the broadest possible interpretation to sexual misconduct to include flirting, holding hands, or becoming engaged to marry without party permission. Molyda was repeatedly warned to stay away from boys; otherwise, she was told, "the plastic bag awaits," a reference to the Communist practice of placing the bodies of executed Cambodians in plastic bags before disposing of them in a river or lake. To drive the point home, she and a group of girls her own age were shown a gruesome exhibit: a group of boys and girls, still holding hands, whose throats had been cut for the crime of planning to marry without approval. (In the area of sexual relations, the Khmer Rouge were not hypocrites. For example, while prison officials were permitted to torture female prisoners, they were strictly forbidden, subject to execution, to take sexual liberties with the women.)

Molyda's family was eventually settled in a village that was typical of Democratic Kampuchea. The village comprised three classes: a small group of party officials at the top; "base people," that is, the peasants who had lived there before the revolution; and the "new people" who had been resettled from the cities. Life consisted of long, arduous hours in the rice paddies, constant battles against the tropical diseases which struck especially hard at the new people, mind-numbing indoctrination sessions in the evenings, and an all-consuming, never-ending struggle for food. Food, in fact, became the basis of a class system far more vicious than that of the most inegalitarian capitalist society. Membership in the wrong class could literally be a sentence of death by starvation (Molyda's large extended family was practically wiped out by starvation). Class vengeance was exacted on a mass scale, with peasants and shockingly young Khmer Rouge soldiers taking retribution for every real or imagined grievance held against the city people.

DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA exemplified not only the hegemony of the countryside over the city, but the rule of the young over the old. The Communists were convinced that the old would never adapt to the new order they were intent on constructing, except through iron repression and coercion. With the young, however, things might be different. Molyda recalls how her younger brothers and sisters were filled with ideas of "equality"; in one poignant inci-

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* *The Stones Cry Out: A Cambodian Childhood, 1975-1980*, Hill and Wang, 245 pp., $17.95. The author eventually reached Thailand and was adopted by Polish exiles living in Paris, whose name she took. A first-rate book, gripping, at times almost unbearably sad, *The Stones Cry Out* has unaccountably received little attention in the United States.

A similar and equally good personal account of life under the Khmer Rouge is *Cambodian Witness* by Someth May, edited and with an introduction by James Fenton, Random House, 288 pp., $17.95.

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dent, her father, who ultimately starved to death so that the children could have more, was refused a mouthful by one of her sisters, with the words, "You're on your own."

The young most favored by Pol Pot were those from the most isolated and destitute regions of the country and therefore the most anti-urban as well. During the war, the Khmer Rouge developed a policy of removing these children, some as young as ten or twelve, from their villages, indoctrinating them, training them as fighters, and promoting the notion that these youths would eventually constitute the ruling elite of the new revolutionary society. Kenneth Quinn, an American researcher whose studies of Khmer Rouge policy toward civilians during the civil war were unfortunately ignored by U.S. policy-makers, concluded that the indoctrination of these ignorant, peasant children was, from the Communist point of view, highly successful:

> Youths returning from these [indoctrination] sessions were fierce in their condemnation of religion and the "old ways"; rejected parental authority; were passionate in their loyalty to the state and party; were critical and contemptuous of customs; and had a militant attitude which expressed confidence in mechanical weapons and rejected the mystical aspects of religion.

One of the most important objectives of Khmer Rouge training was to infuse the young cadres with a callousness toward violence, pain, and killing. A key technique was the torture game. Animals, including domestic animals like dogs and monkeys, were systematically dismembered or burned by the children-soldiers. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, kept under house arrest during the Khmer Rouge period, witnessed these barbarities:

> Young recruits began "hardening their hearts and minds" by killing dogs, cats, and other edible animals with clubs or bayonets. Even after their April 17, 1975 victory, the Khmer Rouge kept in practice with a game consisting of throwing animals into the "the fires of hell," since they had no human victims handy. . . . Another favorite was torturing monkeys, so much like humans in their reactions. Their tails were hacked off. They were chained by the neck and strangled as they ran behind their young captors, who pulled harder and harder on the chains. The screams of the poor beasts were heart-rending. The sight and sounds of them were unbearable. But the young Khmer Rouge *youtheas* (youths) couldn't get enough of it.

The result of the indoctrination and the torture games was the creation of an army of hardened, teen-aged killers, an army considered among the most effective guerrilla movements in history. These *youtheas* were totally devoted to the *Angka*, or party organization; told to kill, they obeyed, unquestioningly, whether the victims were Lon Nol's soldiers, religious believers, minority groups, peasants, fellow Khmer Rouge, or, finally, the Vietnamese. Equally disturbing, demobilized Khmer Rouge soldiers were often placed in charge of collective farms, factories, or other economic or social entities. They were also given responsibility for raising the younger generation of Cambodians, those children, aged six and older, who were taken from their parents, housed in dormitories, and isolated from the lingering influences of the old society.

These children were treated much like adults; in Pol Pot's Democratic Kampuchea, the very idea of childhood had for all practical purposes been abolished. Mainly, children worked; they were quickly integrated into the nationwide work-camp system, assigned to jobs which, although quite strenuous, were economically useless. Molyda, who endured several work projects for young girls, recalls a particularly horrible experience which suggests a great deal about the ignorance and inhumanity of the ruling group. On this occasion, she and a group of girls were set to work building a dirt road. The work was for the most part done at night, and as a result of this and of the inadequate diet, Molyda and other girls soon developed night blindness. The peasant woman in charge of her unit assumed in typical fashion that Molyda was shirking; as a test, she took the girl, in the dead of night, to a graveyard, where she was abandoned. Molyda in fact could not find her way out, thus demonstrating that she was not faking her condition and probably saving herself from execution for refusal to work. But while the Khmer Rouge finally had to admit that blindness had become a problem, they remained undeterred in their determination to complete the project. The blind girls were led to the work site; while other girls broke the soil with pickaxes, the blind girls collected the dirt in baskets.

Closely related to the Khmer Rouge's hostility to the family was a policy of open war against minority groups. The motive was apparently a Nazi-like sense of racial supremacy—an absurd notion to begin with, given the diverse racial origins of what is generally considered the Khmer people. Nevertheless, for the ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese, Thais, and other groups who had co-existed in Cambodia for years, the coming of Communism meant cultural death. In their typically direct fashion, the Khmer Rouge issued a decree abolishing minorities:

> There is one Kampuchean revolution. In Kampuchea there is one nation, and one language, the Khmer language. From now on the various nationalities . . . do not exist in Kampuchea.

Among the most tragic victims of this policy were the Chams, doubly vulnerable for their ethnic distinctiveness and because they were

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Muslims. A Khmer Rouge decree put the matter bluntly: "The Cham mentality is abolished. Those who do not abide by this order will reap all consequences." For the Chams (who, paradoxically, had supported the Khmer Rouge during the civil war), this meant adopting Khmer names, giving up their language, abandoning their distinctive dress, shaving their beards, and giving up their religion. And, of course, their children were taken away, thus preventing the passing on of the Cham cultural heritage. Unlike other groups, who accepted their fate passively, the Chams fought back. Inevitably, they were crushed; whole villages were destroyed, and Elizabeth Becker estimates that half the Cham population died during the years of Khmer Rouge rule. Moreover, those Cham villages which were not destroyed were broken up, and the villagers dispersed into predominantly "Khmer" collective farms.

TODAY, despite having been overthrown by Vietnam, their far more powerful neighbor, the Khmer Rouge remain a force to be reckoned with in Cambodian affairs. Of the three resistance movements engaged in guerrilla war against the Vietnamese occupation, the Khmer Rouge maintain the most formidable army. The Chinese, apprehensive about Vietnamese domination of Southeast Asia, are much more generous in assisting the Khmer Rouge than the non-Communist movements headed by Prince Sihanouk and former Prime Minister Son Sann.

For its part, the democratic world has never effectively come to grips with the Khmer Rouge dilemma. Although the high point of the Carter administration's human-rights offensive coincided with the most brutal phase of the Cambodian terror, officials of that administration were surprisingly restrained in their criticisms of the Pol Pot regime, apparently for fear of damaging the chances for future relations with the Communists. The Reagan administration, although somewhat more vocal about the crimes of the Khmer Rouge, has based its policy on the ultimate withdrawal of Vietnam, a position which requires our continued support for the Pol Pot government-in-exile as the legitimate Cambodian representative at the United Nations.

Yet even if the Vietnamese were to agree to withdraw their troops, Cambodia would be faced with political problems of monumental proportions. Among the most serious of these problems is the future role of the Khmer Rouge in a Cambodian society they nearly succeeded in destroying. Will Khmer Rouge soldiers, conditioned to revile every aspect of the old society, be allowed to serve in a reconstituted army? Will Pol Pot and his lieutenants, those directly responsible for mass murder, be permitted to enjoy full civil and political rights? These questions will not lend themselves to easy resolution, given the correlation of military forces within Cambodia and the current legitimacy enjoyed by the Khmer Rouge.

It is thus essential that the Khmer Rouge be stripped of the credibility they have been accumulating over the past eight years. One worthy proposal, advanced by David Hawk, a foremost authority on the Khmer Rouge era, is a worldwide campaign to indict and condemn Pol Pot and his group for the crime of genocide, with the further objective of ensuring that those most responsible for the reign of terror are prevented from playing a political role in a future, free Cambodian state.

Such a campaign might have important repercussions outside Cambodia. For it now develops that the Khmer Rouge, whose very name is associated with the most abominable totalitarian tyrannies of the century, actually hold a dismaying appeal for certain revolutionary movements in the Third World. Front and center is the New People's Army of the Philippines, which has drawn inspiration from the Cambodian "model," especially in its conduct of guerrilla war. Another ruthless guerrilla army, the Sendero Luminoso of Peru, has many characteristics which closely resemble those of the Khmer Rouge. Clearly, a crucial lesson of the Cambodian tragedy is the utter folly of believing that it cannot happen again.

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Señor Borges's Portico

Joseph Epstein

ONE of the interesting differences between high art and great science is that the former is both unique and its emergence unpredictable in a way that is not quite true of the latter. If Newton had not lived, I have seen it argued, Huygens and Leibniz would have gone on to do his principal work; Wallace was closing in on the theory of evolution for which Darwin has since been recognized as a hero of science; and Edison's work could as readily have been done by Swan (on the incandescent lamp) and Hughes (on the microphone), or so it is said. If Albert Einstein had never lived, it is possible that Ernst Mach or Max Planck or another German physicist would have set to work on the problem of relativity; but if Proust had died in his twenties, there would be no *Remembrance of Things Past*, nor, it seems safe to maintain, any other book remotely like it.

And yet there are some artists, no matter how exotic their origins or how esoteric their gifts, of whom it almost seems as if, had they not existed, they would have to have been invented. Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine writer who was born in 1899 and who died last year at the age of eighty-seven, appears to have been such an artist. In a 1967 essay entitled "The Literature of Exhaustion," the American novelist John Barth, setting out a fairly early claim for Borges as a modern master, allowed that "someone once vexedly accused *me* of inventing" Borges. And indeed Borges was fond of speaking of himself as an invention of sorts, as if there were Borges the writer, who contrived his literary work, and Borges the man, who had gradually become lost in the writer and who was destined "to perish, definitively."

But the sense of the word "invention" I have in mind is of another, somewhat different, kind—it is the sense in which invention is spoken of as being the mother of necessity. For Jorge Luis Borges came along in time to justify the kind of writing that certain academic authors and teachers of modern literature had long been awaiting, even if, until his arrival, they themselves perhaps did not know it.

In "The Literature of Exhaustion"—the very title leaves one longing for a nap—John Barth not only asserts that Borges is one of the few writers worthy of being placed alongside such "old masters" of 20th-century fiction as Joyce and Kafka, but, of the thin line of their successors, Borges is for Barth easily the most interesting. What puts Borges in the first rank for Barth is "the combination of that intellectually profound vision with great human insight, poetic power, and consummate mastery of his means. . . ." But beyond these qualities, which define all literary artists of great power, Barth admires Borges for the way he appears to have both understood and transcended the chief aesthetic problems of the day—Barth rather bumpily calls these "the felt ultimacies of our time." In Barth's view, "it may well be that the novel's time as a major art form is up," which is to say that the day for traditional narrative, with its reliance on cause and effect, characterization, lineal anecdote, and the rest of it, is over, done, *kaput*. Barth isn't saying, or even suggesting, that the novel is dead, but instead that some of its traditionally richest possibilities may be. If this is true, the question is, where does one—if one is, as John Barth describes himself, "of the temper that chooses to 'rebel along traditional lines' "—where does one go from here? The answer, for Barth, is in the direction of Jorge Luis Borges.

Jorge Luis Borges is the answer as well for a great many other writers, critics, and teachers of literature. If the tradition of modernism in fiction is not considered at a dead end, the three writers who may be said to have carried it on with the greatest bravura have been Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, and Jorge Luis Borges. Each in his different way is a mandarin among modern writers; each has about him the feel of an international figure. Of these three, Nabokov, despite his enormous talent, seems too much a special case—an exile and a man writing out of his own obsessions, a rare and beautiful specimen of butterfly forming a species of one; Beckett, despite his comedy of deadpan precision, is finally too dark, even for teachers and critics who do not seem to mind setting up shop right there on the rim of the abyss. But Borges—well, Borges is a different story. Borges has his obsessions, but one can sepa-

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rate them from his work, in a way that it is difficult to do with Nabokov; Borges has his darkness, but it is not the darkness of the inside of a shroud, as Beckett's increasingly has tended to be. Borges has the additional advantage that his work, in its various preoccupations, would seem to make striking connections with that group of writers and critics, most but not all of them university-based, who think of themselves as post-modernist. To quote a postie novelist named Ronald Sukenick on the post-modernist program in literature: "Reality doesn't exist, time doesn't exist, personality doesn't exist. . . . In view of these annihilations, it will be no surprise that literature, also, does not exist—how could it?"

Although Borges would not have put it quite so blatantly, there is evidence in his work for arguing that he, too, believed that reality, time, personality, literature itself did not quite exist. This in any case is the gravamen of those stories of Borges that are most widely admired among American academics. Ours may one day be looked back upon as a time when academics in the humanities in the United States spent themselves debating the question of whether reality truly exists: whether meaning was without meaning; whether not only beauty but ethics and morality generally were only in the eye of the beholder; and whether truth was not inseparable from political power. As Dr. Johnson refuted Bishop Berkeley's ingenious argument for the nonexistence of matter by kicking a large stone ("I refute it *thus*," said he), so today might one refute the academic contemners of reality by proposing that in an unreal world they give up their tenure ("Whaddaya, kidding me?" say they).

ALTHOUGH adored by a certain kind of literary academic, Borges was not—at least not until late in his life—himself an academic. He was from the outset, however, entirely bookish. A frail boy behind thick spectacles growing up in a culture that placed a high value on physical prowess and courage, the young Borges hid out in his father's library, unsystematically devouring its contents, enraptured by the encyclopedias, dictionaries, and above all the stories, especially the stories of adventure and the fantastic, that he found there. "When he did not want to give in," Borges's mother once remarked, "I took his books away. That was decisive." In "An Autobiographical Essay," Borges has noted: "If I were asked to name the chief event in my life, I should say my father's library." Elsewhere in the same essay, he writes, "I have always come to things after coming to books," and he once told an interviewer, "I've always been a greater reader than a writer."

The elder Borges's library was dominated by English books, for the sensible reason that his mother was an Englishwoman from Staffordshire. As Borges's father grew up under his own mother's influence, so was Borges greatly influenced by his father, a lawyer by training, a shy and bookish man by temperament. His father's taste in poetry ran to Shelley, Keats, and Swinburne; in philosophy he had a penchant for metaphysics and psychology, and was partial to the works of Berkeley, Hume, Royce, and William James. He was keen, too, on books about the East, and his library held various editions of *The Arabian Nights*. He wrote and privately printed a lengthy novel, and was a man of serious literary aspirations on which he never made good. He was the fifth generation in his family to go blind because of a hereditary disease. Jorge Luis Borges would be the sixth.

The influence on Borges of his mother was less immediate but of longer duration, in part because she herself endured so long—until, to be precise, the age of ninety-nine, dying when Borges was seventy-six. Apart from a marriage made in his late sixties, which lasted only three years, Borges had otherwise lived continuously with his mother, who until her death filled the role for him of nurse and nanny and, after his blindness, reader. Borges's mother was of Spanish descent, and her forebears were heroic figures in the military history of Argentina. Borges appeared to live off the traditions provided by his two parents: English for culture, Spanish for dreams of heroism.* While linguistic duality was a fact of life at home, he nevertheless learned to read English before he learned to read Spanish. "When later I read *Don Quixote* in the original," Borges once remarked, "it sounded like a bad translation to me."

With its Italians, its English, its Spanish, Argentina was a land of a thousand snobberies. At the turn of the century, among the upper classes, Francophilia was giving way to Anglophilia. The Borges family was of that class of people who were not rich but were cultivated, with distinguished lineage to draw upon. Borges and his sister were educated by an English governess, until Georgie (as he was known among his family) went off to the state school at the age of nine. Within the Borges household, English was used for cultural

* In 1934 a fascist magazine in Argentina accused Borges of being Jewish. He responded with a brief satirical piece entitled "I, a Jew," in which he mocked the accusation of, in the words of the editors of the magazine, his "Jewish ancestry, maliciously hidden." "The participle and the adverb delight me," Borges wrote. "I have often played at [searching for my ancestors] . . . ," he continued, "and it has not displeased me to imagine myself often as a Jew. It is a matter of simple hypothesis, a sedentary and modest adventure that can harm no one—not even the good repute of Israel—in view of the fact that my Judaism, like the songs of Mendelssohn, is without words." But the serious point of the piece is to make plain that no one in Spain, Portugal, or Latin America can have been altogether certain of not having had a Jewish great-grandparent. Religion generally seems never to have been an issue of any serious personal interest to Borges; and his interest in religions, like his interest in scholarship and philosophies, seems to have been wholly aesthetic.

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matters, Spanish for domestic matters, for the latter was the language of servants and the lower orders. Eventually, of course, Georgie would become Jorge Luis, but to the end of his days Borges claimed to have read much more widely in English than in Spanish.

THE Canadian novelist Mordecai Richler once remarked that he divided all experience into the time before he decided to become a writer and the time after, adding that the time before was better. The wisdom of the remark resides in its truth about the nature of experience for those who write and those who do not. Once the decision to write has been made, of course, all experience becomes something to write about—life itself becomes copy, events and emotions judged by their penworthiness above all else. Often, experience before the decision to write has been made seems more central, vivid, real. Perhaps this explains why so many writers—Twain, Hemingway, Salinger—are best at writing about their youth, a time in their lives before they had themselves become writers.

Emir Rodriguez Monegal, a professor of contemporary Latin American literature at Yale, who has written a most useful and highly interesting biography of Borges, attempts from time to time to Freudianize his subject. Borges is big on inserting labyrinths of one kind or another in his tales (one of his books is entitled, precisely, *Labyrinths*), and Monegal, his psychoanalytical engines roaring, suggests that these various labyrinths might be symbolic of Borges's search for the return to the womb. Yet one wonders if a more significant fact for understanding the kind of writer Borges was may not instead be found in how extraordinarily early he determined to be a writer. At the age of six, Borges informed his father that he had made his decision; he once told an interviewer that by the age of eleven he had begun, when reading, "to identify with the author"; and in his "Autobiographical Essay," he writes: "From the time I was a boy, when blindness came to him, it was tacitly understood that I had to fulfill the literary destiny that circumstances had denied my father."

Never for a moment apparently did Borges, or anyone in his family, ever assume that he would be anything other than a writer. As a boy, he hardly seemed fit for anything else. Physically, he was a perfect target for the young hooligans who were his classmates when he went off to public school in Buenos Aires at the age of nine. At the age of ten, he began to talk about philosophy with his father, who was an idealist, which means that he believed that we are living in a dream world, in which we are dreaming God, or God is dreaming us, but in any case in which existence is of the stuff that dreams are made on. In 1914, when Borges was fifteen, the family departed for an extended visit to Geneva, which was to be more extended than they could have imagined, for the outbreak of World War I detained them in Europe until its conclusion. In Geneva he learned French (the language of instruction at the Collège Calvin, where he went to school) and Latin. Later, reading Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, he decided to teach himself German. It was in German that he first encountered Schopenhauer, the philosopher he was to value above all others. And so it would always be with the polyglottal Borges: the reading of books led to the learning of new languages which led to the reading of more books which led. . . . Excepting perhaps only Montaigne, who began writing much later in his life, no more bookish writer than Borges may have ever existed.

After the end of World War I, Borges moved on to Spain, there to continue his studies and to pursue a literary career as a poet. In his first published poem, a bilgy paean to the sea published when he was twenty, he tried to imitate in Spanish Walt Whitman, whom he had himself first read in German. In Madrid he fell in with a group of avant-gardists who styled themselves "ultraists." He was then a lover of mankind: "an anarchist and a freethinker and in favor of pacifism." He wrote poems filled with violent metaphors, essays teeming with bitterness and resentment—in the way that only a young man not yet twenty-two can be bitter and resentful. In an essay about the aesthetics of the whorehouses of Spain, he notes that the curves of one of the girls working there were "sculpted like a phrase by Quevedo." Along with his fellow ultraists, the shy Borges set out to shock the bourgeoisie by reading his discordant poems in public. Was it Valéry who said that everything changes but the avant-garde?

When Borges returned to Buenos Aires, in 1921, he was a published writer, but a writer without a true subject. The city had grown—sprawled, really—during the seven years he had been away, and, as he noted, he now rediscovered it. This city, in its legendary aspect, would one day be among Borges's subjects, but for the time being he was locked into the aridities of the Argentine avant-garde. He ran a number of short-lived magazines, one of which was published on billboards around town; he wrote poetry whose chief intention seems to have been to startle its readers; he took up new affectations, such as, in his writing, trying "to be as Argentine as I could," which meant larding his poems with Argentinisms acquired from a special dictionary. He continued, as always, his reading life, reading in bed each night after dinner; and when he won a literary prize, he used the money to buy a secondhand set of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Eleventh Edition). Thanks to conversations with a friend of his father's named Macedonio Fernandez, another philosophical idealist who "really believed that we are all living in a dream world," he began to read more skeptically. His poems were favorably re-

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viewed in Ortega y Gasset's new journal, *Revista de Occidente*, and he contributed a single piece, an article on the 17th-century Spanish satirist Quevedo, to that journal. But apart from the friendships he made, the years between 1921 and 1930 were regarded by Borges in retrospect as pointless. He later summed them up: "I find myself completely out of sympathy with the priggish and rather dogmatic young man I then was."

BORGES's career had a most odd shape; the line describing it would run from precocity to lengthy obscurity to worldwide acclaim to the danger of academic ossification. "By the late 1920's," Monegal writes, "it was obvious in Buenos Aires that [Borges] was the most important young poet there and a leader of the avant-garde." This is all very well, but in a worldly view comparable to being the best shot-putter in the Junior League, or the winner of a national cha-cha contest for people past eighty. Borges was himself too cosmopolitan a young man not to know this. (He once jokingly proposed starting an avant-garde review to be called *Papers for the Suppression of Reality*—some joke.) By 1929, according to Monegal, Borges realized that he would never achieve his ambition of being a cosmic poet and a universally admired one. He was still chiefly living off his father, but now he turned more and more to criticism and reviewing for both obscure and popular Argentine periodicals.

Borges gives much credit during this period to the influence of a writer named Alfonso Reyes, who was the Mexican ambassador in Buenos Aires. Reyes got Borges to knock off the fine writing and the attempts to forge a style built on 17th-century models in favor of a prose that was precise, concise, and pellucid. Although at twenty-seven Borges had already had the first of the eight eye operations he would undergo before near blindness set in for good in his middle fifties, he continued to store up vast amounts of desultory reading in subjects erudite and arcane. (Borges always had scholarly tastes without any accompanying illusion that he was himself a scholar.) At this point, in his early thirties, Jorge Luis Borges was still a writer who had not found his form, a talent waiting to burst into fruition.

Curiously, Borges was never a great reader of novels, preferring instead the economy and form of the short story. "As a writer, however, I thought for years that the short story was beyond my powers," Borges writes in "An Autobiographical Essay," and "it was only after a long and roundabout series of timid experiments in narration that I sat down to write real stories." At first he did stories based on incidents from the lives of legendary Buenos Aires toughs, for Borges had cultivated the acquaintance of hoodlums from the city's north side who looked back upon the days when a male virgin was someone who had not yet killed his first man. He then progressed to inventing stories or sketches around the lives of men who had in fact existed, such as Billy the Kid or the Jewish gunman Monk Eastman.

Around 1935 he began to publish tales written in the form of pseudo-essays on books or writers who never existed; these became not only Borges's trademark but the chief cause behind his eventual fame.* For it is precisely this kind of thing that excites a writer and teacher like John Barth, who has noted that, instead of yet another stale narrative, Borges in these tales "writes a remarkable and original work of literature, the implicit theme of which is the difficulty, perhaps the unnecessity, of writing original works of literature. His artistic victory, if you like, is that he confronts an intellectual dead end and employs it against itself to accomplish new human work."

In one such story, "An Examination of the Work of Herbert Quain," Borges begins by announcing the death of an author who has been allotted "scarcely half a column of necrological piety" by the *Times Literary Supplement*, and whose first work, *The God of the Labyrinth*, had been obtusely compared, in the *Spectator*, with Agatha Christie, and others of whose books had been compared with Gertrude Stein. Borges then proceeds I won't say to elucidate but to elaborate upon the kind of writer Quain was. He was a writer who took special pleasure in concocting ingenious plots the purpose of which seemed to be to undermine the very notion of plot. " 'I lay claim in this novel,' I have heard [Quain] say, 'to the essential features of all games: symmetry, arbitrary rules, tedium.' " There follows some erudite chit-chat about what Quain was really up to; a few false interpretations of his work are put up and shot down; it is noted that a fallacious interpretation of one of his comedies as a Freudian work determined its success. Quain, who "was in the habit of arguing that readers were an already extinct species," produces a final book entitled *Statements* containing eight stories each of which sets out a good plot deliberately frustrated by the author. From the third of these stories, Borges tells us, he was able to extract his own story, "The Circular Ruins," which actually happens to exist.

Now this may not be everybody's idea of the way to play Parcheesi. But be assured that the board, when Borges sets it up, can be very elegantly laid out, the pieces beautifully carved. One must, it is true, have a taste for puzzles and perplexities to enjoy such a story. It would be a grave mistake, however, to take Borges for a mere game-

* Although there is a certain amount of overlapping in the publication of Borges's work in English, a fairly comprehensive cross-section of Borges titles would include the following: *Borges, A Reader*, edited by Emir Rodriguez Monegal and Alastair Reid, Dutton, 369 pp., $10.00 (paper); *Ficciones* by Jorge Luis Borges, edited with an introduction by Anthony Kerrigan, Grove Press, 174 pp., $6.95 (paper); *Labyrinths. Selected Stories & Other Writings* by Jorge Luis Borges, edited by Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, New Directions, 260 pp., $6.95 (paper).

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ster. He is playing in earnest. Yet his position is a curious one; he is an aesthete who does not quite believe in the efficacy of art. "Music, states of happiness, mythology, faces belabored by time, certain twilights and certain places," he writes, "try to tell us something, or have said something we should not have missed, or are about to say something: this imminence of revelation which does not occur is, perhaps, the aesthetic phenomenon."

To value art above all else and yet to find art nearly valueless—this, surely, is a strange position. How did Borges come to hold it? Whence did it derive? Valéry remarks that "there is no theory that is not a fragment, carefully prepared, of some autobiography." It is not easy, however, to discover the analogue in Borges's life for his theories about art, unless one looks to his reading, the idealism learned at his father's knee, the avant-garde atmosphere in which he came of age, his penchant for metaphysics. But it all seems somehow cerebral, not quite to touch on life, including Borges's own. Utterly skeptical though he may have been about finding meaning in life, this seems in no way to have prevented him from enjoying it thoroughly. We are used by now to our modern writers having an edge of coldness, if not outright nastiness about them—the meanness is the message—but none of this was true of Borges, about whom Monegal has no trouble rounding up the most endearing testimonials, such as, "I believe that he is the best-humored man I ever met," and ". . . as Borges is so intelligent, when talking to him, he gives the feeing that we are also intelligent." This most modern of writers was himself a most old-fashioned gentleman.

Not that Borges's life was one of seamless serenity. Beginning in 1937, he worked for nine years in a minor position at a branch library in Buenos Aires, which he later described as "nine years of solid unhappiness." His job was to help impose a systematic organization on a collection of books so small as to require no such system. He did one hour of actual library work each day, spending the remainder reading and writing. But, now in his forties, he felt humiliated by working at so menial and dismal a job. Further humiliations were to come. During World War II, Borges was pro-British, not so easy a thing to be in preponderantly pro-German Argentina. Borges was an enemy of totalitarianism of every kind, and in his criticism and journalism attacked Hitler's anti-Semitism and his catastrophic effect on German culture. Borges was of course also a great enemy of Colonel Juan Domingo Peron, who, when he came to power, repaid the writer by keeping him under surveillance. In August 1946, Borges was notified that he had been removed from his job at the Miguel Cané branch of the municipal library and "promoted" to inspector of poultry and rabbits in the public markets of Córdoba Street—clearly a macho-style slap from, as Borges would later phrase it, "a president whose name I do not want to remember."

Yet Borges, by his own admission, was never a committed writer—never *engagé*. "My political convictions are well known; I am a member of the Conservative party—this in itself is a form of skepticism—and no one has ever branded me a Communist, a nationalist, an anti-Semite, a follower of Billy the Kid or of the dictator Rosa. . . . I have never kept my opinions hidden, not even in trying times, but neither have I ever allowed them to find their way into my literary work, except once when I was buoyed up in exultation over the Six-Day War." As Borges here makes plentifully clear, there was his politics and there was his writing and, insofar as he could control them, never did the twain meet. And it is true that Borges's stories do appear drained of all political content: questions of good and evil do not arise in his stories and neither can he ever be said to seek to persuade his readers to any conclusions. He wished to entertain and move them, but to move them in a particular direction—toward wonder and wonderment over life's mysteries.

While still working at the library, in 1938, the year his father died, Borges had an accident, an injury to his scalp, after which septicemia set in, causing him to fear for his sanity. As he began to recover, still uncertain of his mental abilities, he attempted a new kind of story, which turned out to be "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*." It is one of Borges's best-known stories and a work of a kind that would become characteristic of the Borges who is most revered in the academy: a narrative discourse upon an imaginary text that pretends to be an analysis of it. What in considerable part accounts for the cachet of this particular story in the university of today is that it is a story about reading. If you are going to make a major statement in the 20th century, you had better make it short: so Borges, who rarely wrote anything more than ten or twelve pages in length, appeared to believe. He also professed to believe that "the composition of vast books is a laborious and impoverishing extravagance. . . . I have preferred to write notes upon imaginary books."

A symbolist from Nîmes, a friend of Valéry, a man whose bibliography reveals him to have been devoted to the arcana of literary study at the highest level, Borges's creation Pierre Menard applies himself to "the repetition of a preexisting book in another language"—the book in this instance being *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. Menard, please understand, wishes to repeat Cervantes's masterpiece *literally*. The project is quite mad, of course, but then, as the narrator of the story avers, "there is no intellectual exercise which is not ultimately useless." After many drafts, which he has destroyed, Menard succeeds in re-

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producing a few chapters of *Don Quixote* exactly. Although both texts are verbally identical, the narrator argues for the superiority of Menard's, its greater subtlety and richness. To him, that a contemporary of Julien Benda and Bertrand Russell could turn out such a work, writing in the prose style of a 17th-century Spaniard while thinking as a 20th-century Frenchman, so that the very meanings of his words, and the meanings behind the meanings, have changed, and with it the meaning of the story—this, truly, is a remarkable accomplishment. As the narrator ends the story by noting:

> Menard (perhaps without wishing to) has enriched, by means of a new technique, the hesitant and rudimentary art of reading: the technique is one of deliberate anachronism and erroneous attributions. This technique, with its infinite applications, urges us to run through the *Odyssey* as if it were written after the *Aeneid*, and to read *Le jardin du Centaure* by Madame Henri Bachelier as if it were by Madame Henri Bachelier. This technique would fill the dullest books with adventure. Would not the attributing of *The Imitation of Christ* to Louis-Ferdinand Céline or James Joyce be a sufficient renovation of its tenuous spiritual counsels?

One could organize a whole little Franco-American school of university literary criticism around a story such as "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*," which provides maps of misreading, mines of misperception, mimes of unreality. It is very much a story for specialists, for connoisseurs ("kind of sewers," as the playful James Joyce of *Finnegans Wake* might have put it). Although Borges began to write such stories before the new academic criticism was really under way, there is a sense in which the stories anticipate the criticism and play into it. As V.S. Pritchett, who is an admirer of Borges, has written: "The risk is—and there are some signs of this already—that criticism of Borges will become an accretion that will force us to see his stories as conceits alone."

But there is more going on in Borges than the organization of conceits alone. There are stories set in the Argentine past, stories about courage, about fate, about mystery; there is also in much of his work a subtle feeling for drama, even if it is not the drama of good and evil, of men swept up by ambition, love, the ambiguities of morality. His stories are all written with a fine eye for detail, for the arresting juxtaposition of word and event, and with that precision and clarity which, combined, make for the highest literary elegance. Borges was a consummate literary artist—of that there can be no question.

The question is, to what uses did he put his artistry? How good, finally, was Borges? Opinions differ—and strongly. V.S. Pritchett, allowing that Borges can be viewed as "a learned pillager of metaphysical arguments," nonetheless maintains that he passes the test for an artist of ideas by his ability to make "an idea walk," which is to say come alive on the page. But V.S. Naipaul, allowing that Borges's puzzles and jokes can be addictive, nonetheless maintains that "they cannot always support the metaphysical interpretations they receive." Octavio Paz holds that "the great achievement of Borges was to say the most with the least," adding that he was able to combine simplicity with strangeness, "the naturalism of the uncommon, the strangeness of the familiar." This is what "gives him a unique place in the literature of the 20th century." But then there is Vladimir Nabokov, speaking perhaps with the acerbity of the rival, who once told a reporter from *Time*: "At first Vera and I were delighted by reading him. We felt we were on a portico, but we have learned that there was no house."

No one can argue that Borges made extravagant claims on his own behalf. After he achieved fame, he gave hundreds of interviews and wrote various prologues and introductions to his own books and to books about him, and in them he mastered the tone of what might be called the modest genius. "The same few plots, I am sorry to say," he wrote in the prologue to his book *Dr. Brodie's Report*, "have pursued me down through the years; I am decidedly monotonous." It is true that Borges's stories and poems and criticism seem a remarkably unified enterprise. This enterprise can, I think, be accurately described as the investigation of reality with an eye toward its destruction.

Borges is above all impressed with the mystery of life, and fascinated above all with those who set out to solve the mystery. Scholars and philosophers especially excite his aesthetic interest. "Borges," Alastair Reid once noted, "really did regard scholarship as a branch of fantastic literature." Philosophy was scarcely less fantastic to him, and he found few spectacles as risible as that of a man attempting to interpret the complexity of the world with a theory. In story after story, Borges tells of plans to find order in the world; in story after story, none is finally available. Men are swamped by infinity, chased by time, rattled by memory.

As these stories unfold—"Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," "The Babylon Library," "The Aleph," "The Secret Miracle"—the planes of reality and unreality intersect and blur. Labyrinths, mirrors, dreams, strange recurrences play through these works, with the effect that man's place in the world comes to seem a highly shaky proposition and human destiny, to copy a trope from Borges's story "Averroes' Search," "a blind camel in the desert." Yet if man never seems so helpless or absurd as when searching for the secret meaning of life, Borges, while positing the precariousness of human existence, is also able to infuse

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poetry into the search, and with it emotion of the kind that results when men are shown alone and at the mercy of a universe they do not begin to understand.

But why would Borges, this gentle and altogether pleasant man, be pledged, in the words of a critic most friendly to him named Ana María Barrenechea, "to destroy reality and convert Man into a shadow"? "I am quite simply," Borges has said, "a man who uses perplexities for literary purposes." Yet can it be quite so simple? Skeptical of almost all philosophies, Borges was most partial to idealism, which posits that life does not truly exist outside the mind of the person, or divinity, who beholds it. In the idealistic view, life could well be a dream; and it was this possibility that Borges seemed to prefer to entertain. As a mere window-shopper in philosophy, I have always liked George Santayana's refutation of idealism, set out in *Egotism in German Philosophy*, which runs, "You cannot maintain that the natural world is the product of the human mind without changing the meaning of the word mind and of the word human." But why would a man of so generally skeptical a nature as Borges turn to idealism, or for that matter to playing with perplexities?

My own unfounded speculation about this has to do with the fact that for years Borges suffered from insomnia. So, too, I recently learned, did Vladimir Nabokov and the Rumanian aphorist E.M. Cioran, two other writers much given to pondering the literary uses of perplexities. So, before them, did Nietzsche, who tried to alleviate it with the use of chloral; and, before Nietzsche, so did De Quincey, who attributed to his insomnia his craving for opium. Borges spoke of "the atrocious lucidity of insomnia." There is something about this tiresome disease, to judge by the roster of writers who have suffered from it, that inflames the imagination, sending it off into dark corners and setting it intricate puzzles.

Some inkling of what a well-stocked mind suffers under insomnia is available in a brilliant Borges story entitled "Funes the Memorius." (Completing this story is said to have cured Borges of his own insomnia.) In it an adolescent boy, Ireneo Funes, a peasant lad who has the unusual ability to tell the precise time of the day without aid of a timepiece, is thrown from a horse and suffers what can only be described as the reverse of amnesia—henceforth, he remembers everything. And he remembers with a vividness of detail that is not only astounding but painful:

> When he fell, he became unconscious; when he came to, the present was almost intolerable in its richness and sharpness, as were his most distant and trivial memories. Somewhat later he learned that he was paralyzed. The fact scarcely interested him. He reasoned (he felt) that his immobility was a minimum price to pay. Now his perception and his memory were infallible.

Borges goes on to report young Funes's extraordinary accomplishments: his ability to master Latin in an evening, his impatience with numbering or indeed with any system employing generalization, or even system itself, which, given his memory, he has no need of. "In the teeming world of Funes there were only details, almost immediate in their presence." To be able to forget nothing, never to turn one's mind off, is of course to live in a kind of hell. Funes's hell is also the hell of the insomniac, as well as the hell of a certain kind of writer. Ireneo Funes cannot bear it past the age of nineteen. "Ireneo Funes died in 1889," Borges concludes his story, "of congestion of the lungs," but what he really dies of is perceptual overload.

This story happens to be a little classic of modernism, in the sense in which Clement Greenberg maintained that "the essence of modernism lies in the use of the characteristic method of a discipline to criticize itself. . . ." Yet was Borges a modernist writer? He himself disdained all artistic labels, saying, "I do not profess any aesthetic. Why add to the natural limits which habit imposes on us those of some theory or other?" And yet it is difficult to disdain them when attempting to place Borges. For when one compares Borges with the modernist masters of fiction, he falls short.

As with Proust, time and memory are of paramount importance to Borges; but, unlike with Proust, in Borges they are not set in the context of love and the intricacies of social relations. Like Joyce, Borges is a master parodist and student of style; but, unlike with Joyce, style in Borges never quite achieves that density of effect that turns it into a way of viewing the world—a vision. There is a weight to Kafka that Borges does not begin to possess. Kafka's argument is with reality, which in his bureaucratic dystopias becomes a nightmare, and he is anguished at his own inability to adjust to reality of this or almost any other kind. Borges, far from arguing with reality, prefers to postulate its nonexistence. When Kafka argues with reality, one feels his very soul is at stake; when Borges plays with reality, one feels it is all in his head.

Borges had for some time been a great figure in the literary life of Argentina, but it was only in 1961, when he shared with Samuel Beckett the Formentor Prize (a $10,000 award furnished by six avant-garde publishers in Europe and the United States), that Borges's renown burst the borders of his native country. He was sixty-two years old, and the award had, in many ways, come just in time. Roughly six years before, owing to his increasing blindness, Borges had to cease writing his stories ("critical fictions," his sometime collaborator Adolfo Bioy Casares called them) and his elaborate essays. He now returned to writing poetry—metrical verse, in fact, the meter serving as an aid to the memory of a man who could no longer see his own text. He now had to be read to. Irony of ironies, he

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was appointed director of the National Library in Buenos Aires, causing him to remark that God had granted him "at one time 800,000 books and darkness." An all too Borgesian story, that.

"As a consequence of that prize, my books mushroomed overnight throughout the Western world," Borges noted. The first consequence was the simultaneous publication of Borges's collection of tales, *Ficciones*, in six different countries. The second consequence was the discovery of Borges by academic literary departments, who fell hungrily on the carcass of his corpus in the middle 60's and are still gnawing on the bones. Honor now followed honor. Borges was appointed to the Charles Eliot Norton Chair of Poetry at Harvard; there was a "Borges Conference" at the University of Oklahoma; magazines published special Borges issues. "An Evening with Jorge Luis Borges" became a not infrequent event on American university campuses; here Borges gave dollar value, for he was impressive on stage; besides, one could hardly watch him without recalling the blindness of Homer and Milton. In 1971 he was awarded the Jerusalem Prize. He gave more interviews than Hedda Hopper got. Monegal writes that "Borges took to fame with an almost childlike glee." One recalls the triumphal visit of Gertrude Stein to America after the publication of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Apparently few things excite an avant-garde writer like a crashing popular success.

In his last years, Borges with his deep-set eye sockets came, in his photographs, to resemble a wise old monkey of the kind one might see perched amid erotic sculpture on the outside wall of a temple in India. To his blindness was added loss of hearing, encasing him in a labyrinth not of his own but of nature's devising. He came to look upon death as a relief. As he wrote about the Argentine poet Leopoldo Lugones, who committed suicide on one of the islands of Tigre, "He may have felt, perhaps for the first time in his life, that he was freeing himself, at last, of the mysterious duty of searching out metaphors, adjectives, and verbs for everything in the world."

Borges's life is a fantastic, better yet a Borgesian, story, made all the richer by the fact that Borges himself enjoyed nothing quite so much as a fantastic story. As he once prophetically wrote:

> A man sets himself the task of making a plan of the universe. After many years, he fills a whole space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fish, rooms, instruments, stars, horses, and people. On the threshold of death, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines has traced the likeness of his own face.

So it is with Borges, a writer without quite the power to present his readers with a new and higher organization of experience, such as only the very greatest artists can provide, but whose complexity and richness caused his art to rise above nihilism to become one of the most charming ornaments of the literature of our century.

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Speak of the Devil

Jaroslav Pelikan

THERE is perhaps no more telling index to the unresolved—and therefore unspoken—theological problems of an age than the nervous laugh. I am sure this was true of the pre-Nazi Berlin nightclubs portrayed in *Cabaret*, and that it is equally true of us today. Now that it has become rather gauche to laugh at sex (except perhaps at virginity or monogamy), all that a standup comic needs to do for a quick laugh, whether on a late-night talk show or in a pulpit, is to take some kind of cheap shot at one of three theological topics: prayer; death and immortality; hell and the devil. These topics, to be sure, are not unrelated, and each would deserve detailed attention in its own right.

Having grown up on Goethe's *Faust* and having just completed a course on Dante which I taught with the head of Yale's department of Italian, I choose the third, hell and the devil, partly because of my longstanding scholarly interest in the place of this cluster of concepts within the development of Christian literature, philosophy, and theology, but also because that scholarly interest has lately been intensified by the reading of a remarkable series of books by Jeffrey Burton Russell, published over the past decade by Cornell University Press: *The Devil: Perception of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (1977); *Satan: The Early Christian Tradition* (1981); *Lucifer: The Devil in the Middle Ages* (1984); and now *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (1986).*

Although two thousand years of association with the New Testament may make it seem as though all of this had come into our language and thought through that channel, Russell's first volume narrates the biography of the devil during the millennia before the momentous day when the tempter, according to the fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, faced Jesus with the three questions in which, as Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor recognized so well, "the whole subsequent history of mankind is, as it were, brought together into one whole, and foretold, and in them are united all the unsolved historical contradictions of human nature." From that earlier history, throughout much of which he functioned as one deity among many others, the picture of the devil brought attributes into his later career that did not comport very well with the various roles he was assigned in the Bible. Thus the Book of Job may be read as the effort to purge him of some of those attributes, and both Judaism and Christianity went on trying to come to terms with the devil's prehistoric past. Repeatedly in his last three volumes, Russell is picking up accents first sounded in *The Devil*.

If, as Russell puts it, it has been the function of the devil to act "as counterprinciple to Christ," his second volume, *Satan*, serves as a description of how principle and counterprinciple interacted in early Christian history. In a chapter entitled "Dualism and the Desert," he suggestively relates the demonology of the fathers of Christian monasticism to the metaphysics of the Manichean heresy, with its dualistic doctrine of a Kingdom of Light and a Kingdom of Darkness, before turning to the thinker who formulated much of the theoretical foundation for Western monasticism and who was also, at least for a time, Manicheism's most brilliant pupil: Augustine of Hippo. Russell shows why the problems of free will and predestination, which daunted the 4th-century Augustine as they were to haunt the 16th-century John Calvin, were closely intertwined with the fate of Satan and the demons. Augustine bequeathed to the Middle Ages, as well as to the Renaissance and the Reformation, the ambiguities of his effort to affirm free will and grace and yet to take seriously the overwhelming power of evil in the world and in the human heart, including and especially its continuing power in his own heart.

Because some of the juiciest imagery in our tradition comes to us from medieval demonologies, Russell's third volume, *Lucifer*, is in many ways the most delightful of the four. A chapter on "Folklore" is filled with trivial and yet profound details from the stories and superstitions of the European peoples. It is counterbalanced by several chapters from what it has become fashionable now to call "the high culture," both on the depictions of the devil in medieval art and literature and on the efforts of scholars and thinkers like Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) to locate him in their cosmologies and metaphysical systems. Our self-styled secular age, in which the third edition of *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* does not even contain the word "ayatollah" (though it has now made it into the Ninth *New Collegiate*) and television "anchor persons" can chatter about Shiite Muslims with-

JAROSLAV PELIKAN *is Sterling Professor of History at Yale. His books include* The Christian Tradition, Jesus Through the Centuries, The Mystery of Continuity, *and* Bach Among the Theologians.

* *The Devil*, 276 pp., $27.50; *Satan*, 258 pp., $27.50; *Lucifer*, 356 pp., $24.95; *Mephistopheles*, 333 pp., $24.95.

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out being able to explain the difference between Shia and Sunni, could benefit from Russell's succinct discussion, "The Muslim Devil."

Inevitably, Russell's fourth and latest volume, *Mephistopheles*, will seem something of a letdown (as a career in the modern world may indeed have seemed to Mephistopheles himself). A chapter with the title "Satan Expiring" recounts the efforts of various modern philosophers, including Kant and Rousseau in the 18th century, to cope with the existence of evil and yet not to resort to the devil as a causal explanation. The final hundred pages or so describe the predicament of Christians in the modern age: "Retreating in disarray, they sacrificed belief in one doctrine after another, like Siberians tossing their babies off the sled to the wolves, in a frantic effort to placate materialism." Belief in the reality of the devil, Russell adds, "was one of the first beliefs to go." Yet a reading of these same concluding chapters also suggests the revenge that the devil has taken on his deniers, as the apocalypticism of Georges Bernanos, C.S. Lewis, and Thomas Mann struggles with the power of evil. A five-page epilogue, "God and Devil," is a moving description of how, for the author and certainly for most of his readers, "the relation of evil to God has in the century of Auschwitz and Hiroshima once again become a center of philosophical and theological discussion."

As WRITING the five volumes of *The Christian Tradition* has given me considerable opportunity to find out in my own scholarly work, there are special hazards in covering the development of any topic across the chronological boundaries that normally define the baronial territorialities of historical scholarship. For specialists in each period will read the treatment of their period as though it were the whole story —which for them it is—and will forget that, especially but not exclusively in the history of ideas and beliefs, the principal "context" of a particular concept in a particular period may well be not the other concepts held in that period, nor for that matter the society (or even the class structure) that held them, but the cumulative development of the concept during the preceding periods. Thus the most important system of thought in the 13th century was the philosophical theology of St. Augustine, who had been safely dead for 800 years. Jeffrey Russell has stood up to this hazard with a combination of scholarship, grace, and good humor. The result is a set of books that art historians and students of literature, as well as philosophers and theologians, can read, as the old saw has it, "with pleasure and profit."

An important component of the pleasure and profit, for me at any rate, has been the opportunity to reflect anew on the checkered career of what Russell (in his own coinage) has chosen to call "diabology."* From the metaphors of the everyday vernacular to the "heights of great argument" and the monuments of great art and literature, diabology permeates our speech and our culture, and with its eerie illumination lets us look into many obscure corners:

> Yet from those flames
> No light, but rather darkness visible
> Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
> Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
> And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
> That comes to all.

Thus John Milton in *Paradise Lost*. When we say "The hell there is," therefore, we may be speaking better than we know.

We can get away with saying it because, as C.S. Lewis reminded us almost fifty years ago in his *Screwtape Letters*, the devil can afford to be far less fussy than the Almighty: it is not necessary to acknowledge the devil's existence to be the devil's faithful servant. Indeed, Goethe's *Faust* to the contrary notwithstanding, it may help such service if the subject pooh-poohs the very idea that there is a devil at all. Pacts with the devil like Faust's are not the usual "conversion experience" for his servants anyway, at least not for us smaller fry among them. Our bargains with Satan usually bear a greater resemblance to the accumulation of installment debt, one incremental bit at a time, until it becomes overwhelming—and, according to most of the tradition, it does not come equipped with a Chapter 11 escape clause. Lewis was arguing, of course, that the post-Enlightenment dismissal of the devil as a piece of superstitious nonsense, described in Russell's chapter "Satan Expiring," does not represent his demise or even his eclipse, for Satan is quite happy to be what we still call a gray eminence, who, reversing the role of the British monarch, can rule even if he does not reign.

ONE of the most far-reaching insights that Jewish and Christian speculation about the devil brought to the historical development of the idea was the identification of Satan as a fallen angel rather than as a principle of evil that had existed as such from eternity. It was an image that succeeded in deepening both the malevolence and the pathos of Satan. Although I am not absolutely sure of this pedigree, I have the impression from various sources that the Latin axiom *corruptio optimi pessima* ("there is nothing worse than the corruption of the best"), for which contemporary life seems determined to provide so much substantiation, came into our usage by way of the reflection of Thomas Aquinas on the fall of the angels. The scheming of the devil to ensnare mortals in his evil ways, which has been the subject of so many sermons and other cautionary tales, as recounted in Russell's summaries both of folklore and of theology, took on special power when the devil was described as one whose

* As he explains, it should, strictly speaking, be "diabolology," but that is unnecessarily difficult to pronounce or even to spell. Or, as the pupil in grammar school is supposed to have observed about the plural possessive of the word "princess," it's easy to spell it, but hard to know when to stop! Russell might have added, but does not, that precisely such an elision was responsible for the evolution of our word "idolatry": in Greek it was *eidololatria*, which the Latin of the early Middle Ages seems to have turned into *idolatria*.

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own pride had gone before his own fall, and who therefore knew every slippery step of the path.

Inadvertently, however, that very theme could itself easily slide into sympathy or admiration, as John Milton discovered. Friends and colleagues of mine who have been teaching *Paradise Lost* for forty years or so tell me that for many members of the present college generation, who are unencumbered by any exposure to the Book of Genesis in home or school, synagogue or church, and whom their frightened (or, perhaps, equally ignorant) teachers have never acquainted with the basic narratives of our cultural tradition, this work becomes their very first introduction to the stories of the Creation and the Fall. Ignorance of tradition makes it philosophically all the more difficult, but pedagogically all the more imperative, to explain Milton's dilemma: to make the power of the tempter plausible and yet to make the temptation abhorrent. Milton's Satan ends up being plausible, all right:

> What though the field be lost?
> All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield:
> And what is else, not to be overcome. . . .
> Farewell happy fields
> Where joy forever dwells: Hail horrors, hail
> Infernal world. . . .
> Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven!

And before we know it, we find our hearts going out to our pathetic fellow creature, who suddenly seems to have become a victim rather than *the* criminal.

What Milton was striving to do, nevertheless, was to locate his description of Satan, Beelzebub, Lucifer, and all that crowd in the framework of biblical monotheism. In Russell's volumes, especially in the second and third, that effort becomes a kind of leitmotif. It was a blessing, perhaps even a gift of providence, that speculation about both devils and angels did not come into biblical religion—from Babylonia, according to many scholars—until after monotheism had, at least officially, acquired a secure position. That did impose on Judaism, and then on Christianity, the awesome responsibility of working out some sort of theodicy—to "justify the ways of God to men," as Milton puts it—a responsibility that the Book of Job absolves by not solving it.

The priority of monotheism also meant, however, that the prophetic faith of both Judaism and Christianity could take the power of evil seriously without capitulating to despair or Satan-worship. If I may confine myself to the history of Christianity, I have always been intrigued by the reversal of logic in the development of Christian doctrine: the doctrine of original sin and the Fall did not come first, as it does in so many catechisms,

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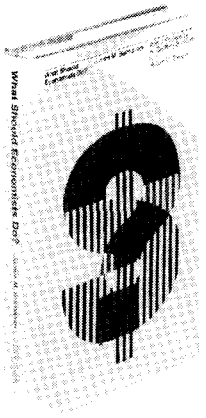

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Preface by H. Geoffrey Brennan and Robert D. Tollison

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Dr. Buchanan is General Director of the Center for the Study of Public Choice and Harris University Professor at George Mason University. Among his other books are *The Limits of Liberty*, and, with Gordon Tullock, *The Calculus of Consent*.

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but achieved full formulation only after the dogma of the Trinity had (according to orthodox Christianity) guaranteed the faith in the oneness of God and then the dogma of the person of Christ had shown the way of salvation. Only then could sin be defined, and in such a way as to make the disease match the cure and the crime fit the punishment. For the only framework within which the *Weltanschauung* of the Bible could handle so volatile a topic as the devil is the sovereignty of the one living God.

JUST what can happen otherwise has become evident in the history of both Judaism and Christianity when their adherents, in past centuries and especially in this one, have toyed with various brands of gnosticism and dualism. Again, let me confine myself to my own scholarly field: having just published a book on St. Augustine, I have recently looked again at the hold that the dualistic schema of Manicheism seems to have had on his mind during the decade or so that he was one of its disciples. His gainsayers past and present have been convinced that neither his Neoplatonic idealism nor his biblical monotheism (whatever the problematic relation between these two may have been) ever managed to break that hold, and that his Christian doctrine of original sin was actually a crypto-Manicheism. Whether that accusation is fair or not, Manicheism does seem to have drawn him because it promised to answer the mystery of evil, by which he was obsessed all his life, and it does seem to have left him disaffected because it did not fulfill that promise. Evil was not, he knew, the sporadic eruption of individual naughty acts, but was an empire, as the Bible describes it, "combining perfidy with perfidy," as Dr. Johnson said of *King Lear*, "to impress this important moral, that villainy is never at a stop, that crimes lead to crimes, and at last terminate in ruin." Little wonder, then, that the most morally sensitive spirits in our tradition, from St. Augustine and Luther to Melville, Freud, and Flannery O'Connor (on whom Russell has written some of his most touching paragraphs) have so often teetered on the edge of this same Manichean heresy.

In addition to the metaphysical and theological difficulties it creates, a dualistic philosophy is, perhaps above all, vulnerable to the charge that it undercuts moral accountability. Ever since the story of the Fall in Genesis—"And the man said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat' "; "And the woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat' "—the tempter has provided a useful explanation, and therefore a handy excuse. The present-day version allows us to blame our parents, our enemies, or a capitalist society, and, when all else fails, to explain that "I couldn't help myself" or that "Anyone who could do something like that has got to be sick." But it is a permanent contribution of Kantian philosophy to recognize that the moral imperative and the sense of moral accountability cannot be treated as mere corollaries of belief in God but are, together with the capacity for a sense of reverence, fundamental to it: "The starry heavens above and the moral law within." Conversely, then, one test of any belief in the existence of the devil, too, must be its consistency with the teaching common to Moses, Socrates, and Jesus: that I am responsible for my actions and that I must accept their consequences. Otherwise, moral maturity is impossible.

WHAT, then, is the proper function of diabology? For one thing, it does permit us—less often perhaps than everyday annoyances would incline us to do, but nevertheless more often than the maxims of St. Pollyanna would suggest—to recognize a personification of evil when it appears within our own history. After recently reading Robert Conquest's chilling *The Harvest of Sorrow*, detailing the mass murder of Ukrainians under Stalin's regime, I have been reinforced in my conviction that "the banality of evil" (to cite the subtitle of the late Hannah Arendt's controversial book about Adolf Eichmann) must not be permitted to obscure the malignity of those powers whose league with the devil assumes massive historical, one is inclined to say "cosmic," proportions.

A distinction I learned from a Swedish friend and colleague, Ragnar Bring of the University of Lund, may prove helpful. Biblical religion, he says, cannot be harmonized with an *ontological* dualism, according to which the power of darkness would have equal metaphysical status with the power of light; for God is light, and darkness is the absence of light rather than a reality on its own. But biblical religion does allow—indeed, demand—an *existential* dualism, for which, in the concrete actions and decisions of life, good and evil do have equal status as possibilities confronting us and either one can win out in any particular case. Job had to admit that he did not know very much about the ultimate mysteries of the ways of God with man, but this much he did know. Darkness Visible does function as though it were an autonomous reality, and what the apostle Paul called "the god of this world" can be the only god whom some people are willing to worship.

For believers, faith in the Creator God acts as a check to keep any existential dualism from becoming an ontological dualism instead. They repeat the affirmation, shared by the *Shema* of Judaism and the Nicene Creed of Christianity, that beyond all plurality, even beyond the antitheses of light and darkness, good and evil, heaven and hell, being and non-being, is the single and simple One Who Is. And such faith is even occasionally given the grace to glimpse, if only for a moment, the vision also of the victory of that One Who Is over all enemies foreign and domestic. But meanwhile the conflict is real, and the defeats are more real, and more frequent, than the victories. As long as that existential predicament continues—and it shows no sign of abating—diabology in some form or other will also continue to have its legitimate place.

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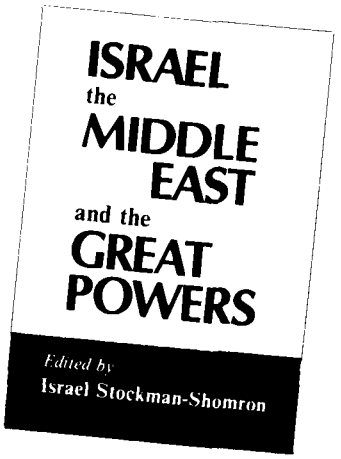

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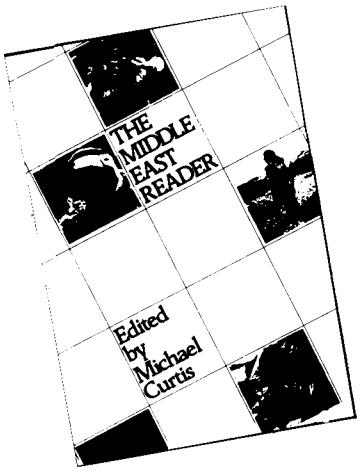

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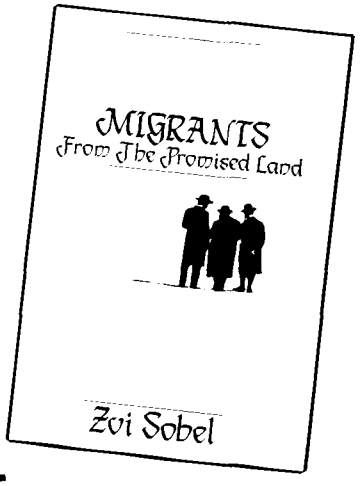

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Empire

IMPERIALISM AND THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST MIND. By LEWIS FEUER. *Prometheus. 265 pp. $22.95.*

THE TEARS OF THE WHITE MAN: COMPASSION AS CONTEMPT. By PASCAL BRUCKNER. Translated by WILLIAM R. BEER. *Free Press. 244 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by SCOTT MCCONNELL

NEARLY thirty years ago, a group of conservative American academics led by Robert Strausz-Hupé produced a volume pointing out some of the accomplishments of the old European empires; the British journalist Peregrine Worsthorne, whose Tory sympathies might have been expected to be engaged by such an enterprise, nevertheless likened it to an effort at resuscitating the divine right of kings.

But if the issue of imperialism has thus long been closed on the political Right, elsewhere it has been kept alive for polemical purposes. The international Left has worked tirelessly to make imperialism a synonym for America's role in the world. Among historians, a lively controversy has centered on the question of where precisely to affix the blame for what is unanimously considered a crime. The suspects include the big banks, industrial cartels, military men acting without state authority, the nationalist passions of the European and/or American publics, and ruling elites threatened by domestic pressures.

The appearance of Lewis Feuer's new book may be a sign that the issue of imperialism is once again becoming open to free-wheeling debate. Feuer's book is not so much a systematic defense of imperialism as it is a series of sporadic raids on the anti-imperialist consensus. Feuer, a sociologist best known for his massive *The Conflict of Generations* and for a number of works on subjects ranging from Marx to the sociology of scientific discovery, here offers a study rich in anecdotes and based on a broad array of sources. His varied thrusts make for challenging reading, but it must be said that his central thesis is more asserted than proved.

Essentially, Feuer maintains that the Europeans brought progress in its various manifestations to the peoples whom they ruled. Driven by altruism and a sense of the solidarity of mankind, they were responsible for conferring the blessings of education, economic infrastructure, and improved health care wherever their dominion extended. This is of course a dusting-off of the old arguments made by defenders of imperialism earlier in this century. Such briefs were always self-serving, but they contained a certain part of the truth as well.

Feuer is not enthusiastic about all forms of imperialism. He makes a fundamental distinction between "regressive imperialism," which seeks to extract short-term profits from its subjects by pillaging the economy, and "progressive imperialism," which aims to elevate living standards. As examples of the latter Feuer cites the Alexandrian, Roman, British, French, and Dutch empires; "regressive" examples are Spanish and Mongol imperialism, and the extreme case of the Nazis. One obvious measure of distinction between the two types is demographic: in progressive empires the population increases, in regressive ones it tends to fall. Another indicator is whether or not labor markets are free; regressive empires consistently resort to force to set wage rates below where they would settle on the open market.

Feuer devotes a lengthy chapter to the subject of Jews and empire. Here he flips through the centuries to bring out case after case in which Jewish communal life has flourished at the peak of empire, and suffered when empire declines. He paints vivid portraits of Jews who forged striking careers in Britain's imperial domain—as scientists, administrators, and capitalists. British imperialism in particular, he argues, unleashed society's "surplus energies," and among the beneficiaries were many Jews who in the outposts of empire found horizons for their ambitions and talents wider than in Victorian England. Among Feuer's portraits are Randlords like Barney Barnato and Alfred Beit who built South Africa's mining industries, and Julius Vogel, one of the constructors of New Zealand.

There is something quite brash about all this; one can easily enough imagine the uses to which a hostile eye could turn Feuer's disquisition on the community of interest between Jews and imperialism. But it is entirely in the spirit of this book to offer not the slightest concession to rhetorical fashion. Feuer pushes ahead relentlessly: his imperialists, by building roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and industries where there had been none before, were among the heroes of their age.

Feuer's brashness may derive in part from his disdain for the best-known European anti-imperialists of the early 20th century. He is especially tough on J.A. Hobson and E.D. Morel, both of whom played a vital role in delegitimizing the idea of empire among Britain's intellectuals. In today's history texts, Hobson and Morel are generally presented as moral exemplars. Most students would never know that Hobson—Lenin's tutor in the political economy of imperialism—was a pronounced anti-Semite whose widely read book *Imperialism* worked as hard to create a myth of behind-the-scenes Jewish financial manipulation as it did to create opposition to empire. The case of Morel is just as instructive. The writings of this leading British anti-imperialist organizer show him to be racist to the bone; his commentary, for in-

SCOTT MCCONNELL, *a historian, reviewed Carlos Rangel's* Third World Ideology and Western Reality *in our October 1986 issue.*

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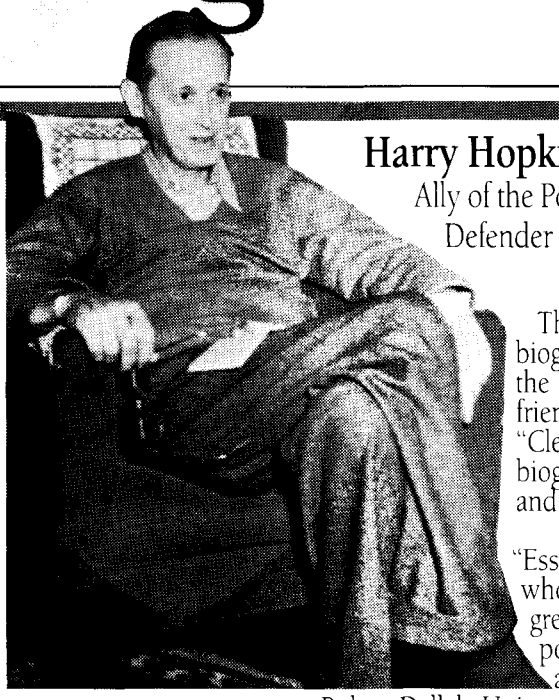

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stance, on the French use of troops from Senegal during World War I and later in the Ruhr is classic Ku Klux Klan material.

UNFORTUNATELY, Feuer himself is capable of carelessness in his use of language. His justification of imperialism rests on a debatable value judgment—that men are better off in an "advanced" civilization than they are in a more "backward" state of self-determination. This idea springs from a bias shared by 19th-century imperialists and Marxists alike, and there are grounds for caution in expounding it. Feuer defines "undercivilized societies" as those in which there is systemic animosity toward free thought and speech, in which science is absent, and in which nonlogical beliefs predominate. This definition stakes out ground from which an argument for "progressive imperialism" could, at least, be defended (although even so one should remark that it silently consigns to the ranks of the "undercivilized" both medieval Christendom and ancient Israel). But, incomprehensibly, Feuer keeps his definition to himself until, late in his narrative, he reveals it in a footnote. Prior to this we are treated to two hundred pages laden with references to "backward" and "undercivilized" societies, terms that have historically come all too readily to the lips of those whose plans for the "undercivilized" have had precious little to do with freedom of thought and speech.

Feuer closes his book with a call for a resurgence of American imperialism, which he deems the only effective counter to the growing Soviet empire. Europe's empires, he acknowledges, ultimately collapsed under the weight of the race question: neither Britain nor France was willing to give its colonial peoples the political rights enjoyed by Englishmen and Frenchmen. Whether the United States could do better is a tantalizing question. Feuer argues for what he calls a non-racial, "participatory" imperialism, a vague term which he fails to elucidate. Since an American empire would evidently mean a limitation on the sovereignty of those former nation-states which would comprise it, one way to explore Feuer's concept is to ask outright whether there are areas in the world that would be better off as full parts of the United States.

Take, for instance, the Philippines. One can imagine circumstances under which Filipinos might wish they had the chance to vote on whether to become part of an American empire, and to acquire the social and political rights which belong to Americans. Yet quite apart from the fact that anti-imperialism is now so entrenched in the American fabric that virtually no one here would be ready to advocate such a course, the costs of doing what would be necessary to raise Filipino living standards to American levels are daunting to contemplate. One wishes that Feuer had confronted such issues, for they are the specific dilemmas which any "progressive" imperialist must face.

Despite its weaknesses, however, this is a provocative and original book. Feuer's blunt attempt to reintroduce such concepts as progress, civilization, and empire into the discussion of what is at stake in today's world can only be regarded as salutary. For why should one assume that the issue of imperialism will never again appear on the world's agenda? After all, the European empires ended more suddenly than most people writing about them in 1930 would have dared to imagine, and the structure which replaced them, now featuring some 160 sovereign nation-states, totters. If the history of Europe's last imperial surge is any indication, no factor is more likely to set the stage for a resurgence of imperialism—though not necessarily, or even probably, stemming from Europe or the United States—than the accelerating breakdown of local and national authority in the post-colonial world.

THE freshness of Feuer's approach can perhaps be appreciated against the background of cant and hypocrisy which play such a large part in the contemporary debate about relations between rich and poor countries. Some striking examples of these qualities are adduced by Pascal Bruckner in *The Tears of the White Man*, a biting commentary on the French political cult of the Third World which grew out of the ashes of French colonialism.

In his first and most powerful chapter, Bruckner deals with the highly politicized "solidarity groups" that pushed the causes of leftist dictators and guerrilla movements during the late 60's and after. The North Vietnamese and the Palestinians were two such causes, but it was above all Maoism that achieved major status among French intellectuals, and that elicited the most egregious instances of sophistry and crass dishonesty.

In France's most respected periodicals, writers fawned over the "socialist man" created by Mao's rule. Socialist man in China, asserted one French intellectual, had no need of safety devices in his factories because he was "an extraordinary acrobat"; the sight of socialist man spending his day tied to a wagon pulling heavy loads inspired another writer to dilate on the outpouring of China's new-found physical strength; others gloated over socialist man's ability to transcend the need for bourgeois freedoms.

Bruckner reminds us that the cult of Mao was at its zenith as China was passing through its most repressive and xenophobic period, and paradoxically began to decline only when the terror of the Cultural Revolution abated somewhat, and China made an opening to the West. In its heyday, the cult was not the ideology of a marginal and sectarian fringe but a central element in an avant-garde consensus in which the most prominent French academics and journalists participated. When such dissenting writers as Simon Leys tried to point out the extent of outright oppression involved in the Cultural Revolution, their evidence was dismissed as American fabrications.

IT IS a telling fact that Westerners who have involved themselves with Third World solidarity movements have invariably chosen those most hostile to the West. From this Bruckner concludes that such movements have nothing to do with the real Third World, which serves only as a convenient "mental province," and everything to

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do with hostility to one's own society. Bruckner has compiled a rich dossier of quotations to illustrate his point.

Explaining the source of this self-hatred is another matter, however. Early in his book, Bruckner suggests that it has something to do with a stream of Christian guilt which runs deep in the foundations of Western political culture. This is an intriguing if finally unconvincing explanation; it is a shame that Bruckner does not work to pursue it further. But in any event an opposite view seems more plausible: that the Western intellectual's affinity for foreign tyrants has its source in a vacuum in the symbolic realm left by the West's long century of secularization. As Paul Hollander has written, intellectuals have "turned out to be the least able to confront without pain a world from which 'the gods have retreated.'"

Bruckner also dissects two other movements through which Frenchmen (and other Westerners) encounter the Third World. One is represented by the various organized groups professing compassion for those suffering from hunger and deprivation and thereby tending the flame of Western guilt. Another is made up of the hordes of young Westerners who travel, in the literal and figurative sense, to the East in search of religion, wisdom, and style.

Such people hardly deserve (and do not receive from Bruckner) the kind of scorn appropriate to the admirers of revolutionary dictators. They do, however, provide Bruckner with a rich field of opportunity for some pungent writing. His imaginary rendition of the internal monologue of a Westerner forced to wade through crowds of beggars ensconced outside his Third World hotel is calculated to bring to many readers an uncomfortable shock of recognition. He has mischievous observations to make as well on those Indian religious entrepreneurs who were among the principal beneficiaries of the 60's infatuation with things Eastern. According to Bruckner, these gentlemen were the first to recognize that the legions of American and European youth coming in search of Oriental spirituality could be best satisfied by the tight discipline of an authoritarian ashram, and would pay for the privilege.

TAKEN together, these two books indicate that relations between the West and the less developed countries are every bit as troubled and unnatural today as they were during the colonial era. Indeed, Bruckner's work would support the argument that in the realm of ideas and communication, things are worse than they have ever been. As for Feuer's revisionist argument concerning the imperialism of the past, today's chaos cannot but lend it a certain retroactive plausibility. Yet even for one who favors a more expansive American role in the world, a resurgence of American imperialism sounds like a leap into the abyss; one can only wish that the many trends that promise to make such a leap seem necessary would reverse themselves.

Conspiracy Theorist

WILHELM MARR: THE PATRIARCH OF ANTI-SEMITISM. By MOSHE ZIMMERMANN. *Oxford University Press. 178 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by RICHARD S. LEVY

NO ONE thought much of Wilhelm Marr during his long life (1819-1904) or afterward. Karl Marx called him "loathsome." The historian Heinrich von Treitschke, the doyen of academic anti-Semites, referred to him as a "windbag." Nazis, offended in retrospect by his flamboyance, harbored (unwarranted) doubts about the purity of his Aryan blood. He married four times and divorced two of his three Jewish wives. He was just not a likable man.

Nor did he have steady principles. Over a political and literary career of forty years, he espoused anti-Christian atheism and the defense of Christian-Germanism; German particularism and German unity; the rights of man and black slavery; socialism and the sanctity of private property; equality for Jews and anti-Semitism. He was not an important thinker, enjoyed only modest success as a litterateur specializing in satire and heavy irony, and was by his own admission a terrible failure as a politician.

Yet Marr was more than an interesting crank, and his life has more than antiquarian interest. It touches and comments upon some major episodes of 19th-century history,

RICHARD S. LEVY *teaches history at the University of Illinois at Chicago.*

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from his beginnings as a Young Hegelian among the German artisans and exiles of Switzerland during the 1840's, through the Revolution of 1848, the turbulent politics of German unification, and the rise of social democracy and modern anti-Semitism in the 1870's and 1880's. He was personally acquainted with Marx, Mazzini, Wagner, and Bismarck. He left behind over thirty published books and pamphlets, reams of journalism, and a large collection of unpublished papers. Still, had he not in 1879 written "The Victory of Jewry Over Germandom" and been credited with coining the term "anti-Semite," he would have remained forever in obscurity. This pamphlet and the speedy adoption of the neologism attached to it have much to tell us about the nature of anti-Semitism. So do Marr's life and thought.

A few scholars have picked over Marr's career, but Moshe Zimmermann is the first to have undertaken serious research, and he has found out a good deal more about the details of Marr's life than had been previously known. He has managed this by a diligent reading of Marr's unpublished memoirs and by meticulous attention to the immediate setting of his activities in Hamburg and Berlin. Since I am myself now writing a book on Marr and the meaning of anti-Semitism, I can say with admiration that this hard work will not be improved upon.

Unfortunately, Zimmermann tells the story of Marr's life as though it will, of itself, illuminate the subject of anti-Semitism. But the context in which he places the life is too small, too narrowly focused on the political, professional, and emotional travails of the man. Zimmermann does not tell us enough about Germans and Jews or about the European intellectual tradition within which Marr developed.

This defect is apparent in his treatment of the matters that justify a biographical study of Marr in the first place—the famous pamphlet of 1879 and the term, "anti-Semite." "The Victory of Jewry" was not Marr's first piece aimed against the Jews. Seventeen years earlier, after his return to Hamburg from a period of travel in North and Central America, he published "A Mirror to the Jews" (1862). There, citing "biblical evidence" and his own personal experience, he argued against the legal emancipation of Jews, at least so long as they adhered to their archaic religious customs and failed to assimilate completely. Often illogical, the "Mirror to the Jews" was also traditional, a plea to fend off the pretensions of "this alien people." Zimmermann shows that the pamphlet, which fell into almost immediate oblivion, was occasioned by Marr's political grudges against some of Hamburg's leading Jewish politicians. But here and elsewhere, Zimmermann confuses occasion with cause.

Marr had begun his political career in the 1840's as a radical democrat, a self-professed "apostle of freedom" and human equality. That he found it possible to square an attack on the "tribal characteristics" of Jews with his democratic principles cannot be explained by reference to a simple political vendetta. In fact, Marr's previous publications show a clear anti-democratic trend, beginning even as the Revolution of 1848 was failing. In 1852 Marr wrote an analysis of the failure of the movement toward democratic emancipation; although quite self-critical, it also placed chief blame on the unreliable and easily misled masses of Germans, who listened to the wrong leaders and were prone to mindless violence. This loss of faith in the masses was, I think, crucial to Marr's becoming an anti-Semite. He never forgave the *Volk*, and the theory of Jewish conspiracy he later developed rested ultimately on the gullibility, greed, and stupidity of ordinary Germans as much as it did on the evil of Jewry.

MARR could abandon a democratic world view but not his own personality, particularly not his personal ambitions or the conception of himself as an important thinker. In his early writings there recurs a telling image: the search for a "fulcrum and a lever long enough to lift the world off its hinges." The metaphor is unoriginal, but it reveals his most consistent motivation. More than anything else, Marr yearned all his life to be famous, influential, and, in his terms, "honored."

Citing Marr's memoirs, Zimmermann reports that he was genuinely surprised and hurt by the reaction of his democratic friends to "A Mirror to the Jews." But Marr's retrospective and self-serving memoirs are a less valid guide to his real motives than his highly autobiographical publications and public utterances at the time. These reveal that his airing of anti-Jewish views was a calculated act. Marr had learned from reading Machiavelli, he tells us, that the *Volk* was a law unto itself, best compared to something elemental like the sea. One had but to learn to sail upon it. An appeal to the irrational hatred of Jews, something that Marr already felt typified 90 percent of the Germans of all classes, might provide him with that Archimedean lever to repair his declining political fortunes and launch him on a new career. He was, in short, making a conscious political choice.

This is not to deny either Zimmermann's well-documented evidence of Marr's deep personal animus toward some Jews, or even his less well-grounded speculations about Marr's troubles with his baptized Jewish father-in-law and unloved wife. But the significance of this first, unsuccessful foray into anti-Jewish polemics is not exhausted by establishing its origins in the details of his personal or political relations.

The ease with which Marr was able to adopt an anti-Jewish position is instructive. Jews responded feebly to the book; some of his Jewish friends—and he had many—even forgave him his vile sentiments. For in truth, what he said about the Jews was wholly unoriginal, borrowed liberally from a long, often quite nasty discussion of the Jewish question in Germany and in Hamburg. Marr was more particularly inspired by his culture heroes, Voltaire, Spinoza, Heine, and Ludwig Börne. And he repeated what his Left-Hegelian acquaintances and models—Marx, Hess, Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer—had written or were known to have thought about the Jews. While

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he was no longer a democrat, he did not wish to lose the respect of former comrades, and did not think he would do so merely by speaking out against the Jews.

It was the further development of these anti-Jewish views, and especially the willingness to act on them, that would eventually separate Marr from other left-wing haters of the Jews. While acrobatically searching for a political cause that could do him some good, and writing as compulsively as ever on affairs of the day, Marr gradually constructed a theory of Jewish conspiracy to accommodate his needs. Among these, the need to feel ideologically "justified" may have been the most important. His succession of failures, his personal experiences with Jews, his declining health and fortunes—his general lack of significance—could all be laid to Jewish evil, but the argument had to be made in grandiose style. A Jewish conspiracy of world-historical dimensions was thus called into existence to explain what a more courageous and honest man might have attributed to his own shortcomings.

Marr did not put this conspiracy theory fully before the public until 1879, when he published the pamphlet which made him briefly famous. He had argued in 1862 that to emancipate the Jews would simply not work, that they would make use of legal "privileges" to enhance their material position. Now, in "The Victory of Jewry," this argument was obsolete. The Jews had won legal equality in the whole German empire and there was no stopping them. An unassimilable race bent on world conquest had already conquered Germandom.

With his telling portrayal of Jewish triumph at German expense, Marr was trying to goad his readers into action. They were told that the visibly prospering Jews had engaged in an 1,800-year conspiracy against them, culminating in a Thirty Years' War of pillage. And there was reason for them to believe him. German unification had been followed swiftly by a financial crash and depression, rapid urbanization, and the appearance of a militantly organized proletariat. The peasantry and lower-middle classes felt desperately threatened by these developments and by the chaotic transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy. "The Victory of Jewry" expressed the need of countless Germans to assign blame for all this.

Marr, for the only time in his life, found a public ready to hear his message, and ready as well for a political movement based on it. By the end of 1879, "The Victory of Jewry" had gone through eleven editions, and in that eleventh edition there appeared an announcement of the formation of an "Anti-Semites' League." In all likelihood this was the first use of the word in a political sense, and it was almost certainly the creation of Wilhelm Marr.

Zimmermann is informative on the incidental political value of the new word. It was the atheistic Marr's way of avoiding association with the familiar Christian/social contempt for Jews. "Anti-Semite" had a scientific ring, proclaiming a racial rather than a religious connotation to the Jewish question, and was vague enough to fend off what was expected to be a ferocious legal counterattack by Jews. Characteristically of the man, however, the term was also misleading, and later anti-Semites would be peeved at being saddled with such an imprecise description of their world view.

All this is interesting, but again misses the main point. The designations "anti-Semite" and "anti-Semitism" gained immediate currency all over Europe. They answered a need for new terms, terms that better described a new and, it was felt, necessary form of action against Jews. Marr, the inveterate politician, had understood that once Jews gained legal emancipation, the old sorts of anti-Jewish behavior—the occasional book, the occasional pogrom—were no longer

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adequate. Now it was too late for such defensive gestures. A continuous political effort would have to be mounted, institutionalized in parties, propaganda associations, and newspapers.

Anti-Semitism not only proffered a reinterpretation of the past and the present, but demanded a new, broadly based politics. Wilhelm Marr, who had been living this new definition of anti-Semitism for the past decade, spelled out the politics of it in a spate of follow-up pamphlets that helped channel the hatred, contempt, and fear of Jews already present in German society into a movement whose terrible consequences he could scarcely imagine.

Revolutionary Tourism

THE JAGUAR SMILE: A NICARAGUAN JOURNEY. By SALMAN RUSHDIE. *Viking. 171 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by GEORGE RUSSELL

THE Nicaraguan revolution of 1979 must surely go down as one of the best-marketed efforts of its kind in history. When the dictator Anastasio Somoza fled the country on July 17, after an explicit U.S. decision to withdraw support from his family's forty-six-year-old regime, domestic and international opinion anointed a small—about 500-member—Marxist-Leninist grouping, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), as the principal legitimate political force in the country. Only five years earlier, the Sandinistas had been regarded as a minor terrorist fringe element, founded by a graduate of Moscow's Patrice Lumumba University, Carlos Fonseca, and peopled by cadres trained in Cuba, the Eastern bloc, and sundry PLO training camps. There had been no question about the ideology and motivation of the Sandinistas, nor was there any doubt as to their obscurity.

One reason for the great change in the status of the Sandinistas was, needless to say, the obduracy and corrupt brutality of the Somoza dictatorship. But another critical factor was a decision by the Sandinistas to change their political tactics and their image. As outlined in the *General Political-Military Platform* of the FSLN, published in 1977, that change involved a *tactical* alliance with elements of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, various other "progressive" social elements, including sectors of the Roman Catholic Church, and international groups that could aid in isolating the Somoza regime. The new Sandinista program was backed by Fidel Castro, who gathered bickering Sandinista leaders in Havana in 1978 to demand their unity behind the program in return for his support. Castro's role might well have gone considerably further than that. The platform that he endorsed, associated with the *tercerista* faction of the FSLN headed by Daniel Ortega, currently Nicaragua's President, and Humberto Ortega, currently head of the Sandinista army, was not terribly dissimilar to the strategy that had brought Castro himself to power in 1959.

What was important, though, was the profoundly political nature of the change in Sandinista posture. It recognized that the way to defeat Somoza militarily was to isolate him politically, and that the road to that goal led through a policy of deliberate deception. The Nicaraguan revolution was to have a "revolutionary-democratic" phase, in which other elements of national society would play an active role, but in which the FSLN would never give up its vanguard role. Anyone who wittingly or unwittingly subordinated himself to that political arrangement would be welcomed into the broad anti-Somoza coalition. Anyone who did not would, by definition, be "counterrevolutionary," and would be dealt with accordingly in due course.

In a sense, there was nothing new about the Sandinista scheme for political-military success. It adhered to the familiar Leninist doctrinal necessity of extreme tactical pragmatism in the formation of revolutionary alliances, coupled with equally extreme strategic-ideological rigor in deciding how long, and under what circumstances, they would last. In Nicaragua, that necessity was summed up in a single, otherwise impenetrable sentence attributed to Humberto Ortega: "Sandinism is Marxism-Leninism, and Marxism-Leninism is Sandinism."

Since 1979, the political and economic direction of Nicaragua has proceeded as it might in any country locked within the paradigm of those principles: the national economy is in worse tatters than ever; the scope of civil liberties has dramatically shrunk; tens of thousands of Nicaraguan citizens, including much of the professional middle class, has fled the country. More striking still, foreign powers, represented by Soviet, Cuban, and other Eastern-bloc advisers, have a greater say in the running of Nicaragua than at any previous time in the country's history, including during the notorious U.S. Marine intervention of the 1920's. Yet that is never how the Sandinista revolution has appeared to the outside world. By and large, the exact role of the FSLN leadership in these disasters has probably received less scrutiny than would be received by any other government in the hemisphere. Why?

The ready answer remains, of course, the United States. On the one hand, undeniable U.S. hostility toward Nicaragua's new ruling class is, according to that class, the continuing excuse for every Sandinista domestic failing. On the other hand, that excuse is readily accepted, not only by members of the international left-wing intellectual community, but also by a significant fraction of the U.S. Congress. The debate over the internal significance of Nicaragua's political evolution thus takes on the structure of one of the great morality plays of 20th-century Western discourse: Revolution Betrayed vs. Revolution Besieged.

SALMAN RUSHDIE's own distinguished stature may be the most interesting thing about his mildly qualified apology for the Sandinista regime. Rushdie, who was born in Bombay in 1947 and now lives in London, won England's Booker

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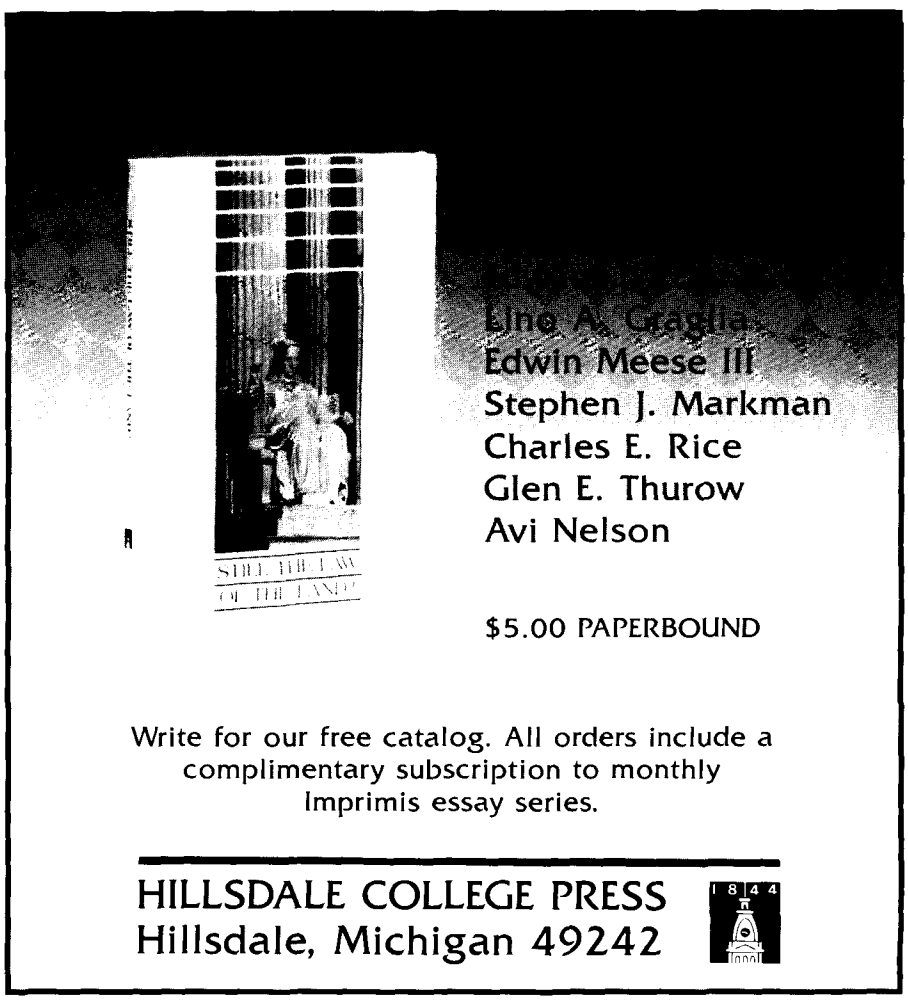
Prize in 1981 for his novel *Midnight's Children,* a dazzlingly satiric look at the bewildering edifice of independent India. He now has a fast-developing reputation as an English-speaking "Third World" novelist that may soon approach that of V.S. Naipaul. Rushdie's politics, though, are vastly different. Broadly speaking, they might be described as a free-form amalgam of anti-colonialism, criticism of the U.S. and its foreign policies, opposition to the alleged depredations of multinational corporations, and advocacy of the ill-defined South against the industrial North in the global debate over international development—in short, a mess of intellectual pottage common to the left wing of the British Labor party. Where Nicaragua is concerned, Rushdie is candid about his bias. As a sponsor of the pro-Sandinista Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign in London, he wrote his slim meditation after a whirlwind tour of the country sponsored by the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers,

What is most remarkable about Rushdie's book is its breathlessness, little different, in its way, from that of an American undergraduate arriving for the Nicaraguan coffee-picking season. Rushdie adds his own Third World twist to that naiveté: "In my first hours in the [Managua] city streets, I saw a number of sights that were familiar to eyes trained in India and Pakistan: the capital's few buses . . . were crammed to bursting-point with people, who hung off them in a very subcontinental way." As they do, subcontinentally, in almost every major Latin American city. But to Rushdie, the point is of a metaphysical Third World solidarity. "It was perhaps also true that those of us who did not have our origins in the countries of the mighty West, or North, had something in common . . . some awareness of the view from underneath, and of how it felt to be there, on the bottom, looking up at the descending heel."

Much of Rushdie's book consists of admiring conversations with Nicaragua's various *comandantes* and other leaders, saying much the same things that they have said for years. Nicaragua's Vice President, Sergio Ramírez, defends Sandinista agricultural policy with the assertion that "Nobody who stayed in Nicaragua to work his land had it confiscated." Members of the country's Superior Council of Private Enterprise who remain in Nicaragua might disagree, but it would appear that Rushdie never talked much to them. Nicaragua's mercurial Foreign Minister, Miguel D'Escoto (whose father once served as a Somoza Foreign Minister), tells Rushdie that "I've never said it before, but now I think the Americans will come. The invasion will happen." In fact, D'Escoto has been warning shrilly of a still-to-arrive U.S. invasion of Nicaragua since 1980. Rushdie passes on several personal slanders uttered by Nicaraguan President Ortega against the country's highly respected Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo (among them is the assertion that Obando y Bravo, who opposed the Somoza dictatorship, was on the dictator's payroll). The author jibs occasionally at Nicaragua's censorship policies (he is, one imagines, a member of PEN), but muses, "Maybe, in the end, it came down to this . . . : were these dictators in the making? I answered myself: no. Emphatically, no."

In essence, Rushdie's book reproduces the canned tour that the Sandinistas are known to give to virtually any sympathetic dignitary who hits town, with additional brief space allotted to a few regime opponents such as Violeta Chamorro, a member of Nicaragua's original governing junta who has emphatically broken with the Sandinistas. It is difficult to imagine any author taking a similar tour of, say, Chile, and reproducing it so uncritically.

Why has Rushdie written such a book, which can only raise serious questions about his intelligence,



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judgment, and sincerity as an autonomous witness? He provides his own answer. "For the first time in my life, I realized with surprise, I had come across a government I could support, not *faute de mieux*, but because I wanted its efforts . . . to succeed."

Not because they had succeeded, but because he wanted them to. With that statement, Rushdie joins hands with the many who felt in the 1930's that the Soviet Union, for all its imperfections, had to be supported against the threat of "imperialist aggression." If Sandinista strategy in Nicaragua owes much to the tactical ideas of Lenin, there is little new, either, in the ethical rationalizations of many Sandinista supporters.

A Woman's Place

MEN AND MARRIAGE. By GEORGE GILDER. *Pelican. 219 pp. $15.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

CERTAIN controversial books, as George Orwell suggested in *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* are influential in inverse proportion to their availability. Whether ruthlessly suppressed or merely remaindered, these books eventually acquire a patina of veracity deriving partly from the simple fact that one cannot find them on the average shelf of the average library.

George Gilder's *Sexual Suicide,* published in 1973 to an almost unanimous chorus of hostile comment and removed from print as quickly as propriety allowed, has long since achieved the whispered celebrity which Orwell ascribed to the fictional Emmanuel Goldstein's *The Theory of Oligarchical Collectivism.* Older American conservatives regard it as the ultimate compendium of sexual heresy, a book which shamelessly flies in the face of each and every tenet of feminist orthodoxy. But *Sexual Suicide* has been more talked about than read in recent years, and there are many younger conservatives who have no idea that George Gilder was once chiefly known not as an advocate of entrepreneurial capitalism but as an opponent of feminism.

Not long ago, suspecting that the time was ripe to circulate his thesis once again, Gilder approached several publishers about bringing out a new edition of *Sexual Suicide.* The idea made sense. What publisher would pass up the chance to reissue a fabulously controversial book by the author of the best-selling *Wealth and Poverty*? But it turned out not to be so simple as all that. According to Gilder, "protests from feminist editors" caused every New York publishing house he approached to turn down his proposal. Perhaps some unwritten chronicle of the intellectual history of the present decade will contain a footnote recording the fact that George Gilder had to go to an obscure publishing house in Louisiana in order to find a taker for *Men and Marriage,* his "revised and expanded" edition of *Sexual Suicide.* Certainly nothing could be more characteristic of the current climate of opinion than the manifest unwillingness of feminist intellectuals to give Gilder even the semblance of a hearing.

Gilder's book, it turns out, is every bit as heretical as rumor long has claimed. His extensive revisions will only serve to heighten the righteous outrage that *Men and Marriage* will evoke in any feminist who bothers to read it. And one can hardly blame the feminists, given their initiating assumptions, for wanting to suppress a book which advances in all seriousness the supreme heresy: that a woman's place is in the home.

This may sound like a *reductio ad absurdum* of what reason insists must surely be a more elaborate position. But George Gilder's thesis can nonetheless be reduced without too much violence to this bald statement. The complexities of *Men and Marriage* lie not in the author's thesis but in the reasoning behind it.

For Gilder, "the differences between the sexes are the single most important fact of human society." Two of these differences are central to his argument: male aggression and female childbearing. Primitive man, Gilder explains, discharged his inborn aggressive tendencies through hunting. When agricultural societies began to develop, ritual behavior replaced hunting as a means of dealing with aggression. But the capitalist revolution provided men with a new and superior structure of motivation: the nuclear family. As Gilder writes:

> The crucial process of civilization is the subordination of male sexual impulses and biology to the long-term horizons of female sexuality. . . . In creating civilization, women transform male lust into love; channel male wanderlust into jobs, homes, and families; link men to specific children; rear children into citizens; change hunters into fathers; divert male will to power into a drive to create. Women conceive the future that men tend to flee; they feed the children that men ignore.

Gilder sees marriage as an institution which civilizes men by making them fathers. Monogamy and the nuclear family canalize male aggression and prevent a society from adopting the "unmarried male pattern" of behavior.

Men and societies that abandon these institutions do so, Gilder warns, at their peril. Our own society, by encouraging women to shake off their traditional roles as mothers and housewives, is weakening the nuclear family and unleashing the ominous forces of male aggression. The results, Gilder believes, have been all too predictable: divorce, homosexuality, ghetto crime, rising illegitimacy among the poor, declining birth rates among the middle class.

Men and Marriage places the blame for these apocalyptic developments squarely on the women's movement and the "ideology of sexual liberalism," which Gilder sees as a species of Marxism. ("The men's role that feminists seek is not the real role of men but the male role of the Marxist dream.") The only alternative to the "sexual suicide" of Western civilization, he contends, is a return to a society in which traditional sex roles are accepted as both proper and innate, where most men are providers and most women nurturers.

TERRY TEACHOUT *is a member of the editorial board of the New York* Daily News.

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THOUGH to present Gilder's arguments so briefly may be to oversimplify them, their distinctive flavor is easy enough to convey. Always a romanticizer, Gilder has reached new heights in this line in the fourteen years since *Sexual Suicide* was first published. Dreadful purple patches soil nearly every page of *Men and Marriage* ("And then arises the fire that purges and changes him as it consumes his own death. His children... they will remember. It is the only hope"). Gilder is never far away, one feels, from something very much like hysteria. And his politics have also hardened noticeably since 1973. Allying himself unhesitatingly with the "so-called reactionaries" of the fundamentalist Right, Gilder embraces their ideological diversity with startling enthusiasm:

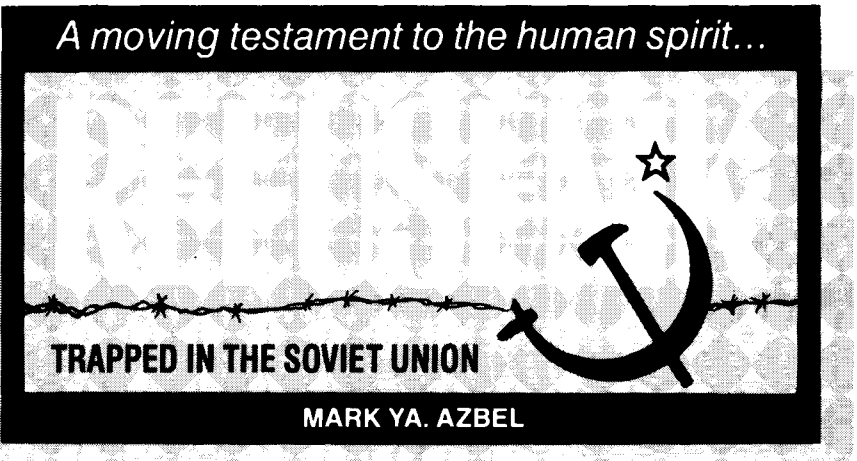
> The idea that America might find renewal from a melange of movements of evangelical women, wetbacks, *Dartmouth Review* militants, South Asian engineers, Bible thumpers, boat people, Moonies, Mormons, Cuban refugees, fundamentalist college deans, Amway soap pushers, science wonks, creationists, Korean fruit peddlers, acned computer freaks, and other unstylish folk seems incomprehensible to many observers who do not understand that an open capitalist society is always saved by the last among its citizens perpetually becoming first.

Needless to say, this is not the customary language of serious intellectual discourse. What Gilder has written is less a treatise aimed at persuading the undecided than a tract designed to reinforce the committed. *Men and Marriage* is full of references to the ideology of "sexual liberalism." Can there be any doubt that Gilder's goal has been to construct a comparable ideology of sexual conservatism? One notes with interest that Gilder's first chapter, "The Princess and the Barbarian," is literally cast in the form of a myth. The whole of *Men and Marriage*, in fact, reduces to a myth, a poetic vision of masculinity and femininity as idiosyncratic and unscientific as *Das Kapital* or *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

What is frustrating about the approach is that the insights on which Gilder's sexual myth is built are genuinely compelling. Time and again one encounters striking passages that are rooted in cool observation rather than in some fantastic construct of a fevered imagination. When Gilder analyzes the way in which black masculinity is undermined by the welfare system, or suggests that male homosexuals are promiscuous largely because they lack a female check on the natural promiscuity of males, one immediately recognizes an original mind at work. Like its predecessors *Visible Man* and *Wealth and Poverty*, *Men and Marriage* is in its best moments a valuable, stimulating, and persuasive book.

But it is nonetheless far from being a systematic analysis of human sexuality or even a systematic defense of the nuclear family. And there are more than a few passages that lead one to suspect that, his gushing admiration of women notwithstanding, Gilder's true notion of their place in civilized society is motivated by something akin to misogyny ("Jeane Kirkpatrick, a rather obscure professor promoted to UN ambassador and national eminence by the Reagan administration, began whining about sexism and discrimination when that same administration failed to put her in charge of U.S. national-security policy"). Compared with a serious discussion of conservative sexual ideology like, say, Roger Scruton's recent *Sexual Desire*, *Men and Marriage* begins to look in places suspiciously like the work of a crank.

The impression is an unfortunate one. George Gilder is no crank, and had he tempered his rhetoric and written *Men and Marriage* with the skeptical reader firmly in mind, he might well have given us the *Losing Ground* of the sexual revolution. But Gilder has insisted instead on preaching only to the converted, and so for all the good his steamy jeremiad will do, he might



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just as well have written about the decadence of atonal music as about the dangers of feminism.

Going It Alone

HOW NATO WEAKENS THE WEST. By MELVYN KRAUSS. *Simon & Schuster. 217 pp. $18.95.*

Reviewed by ALVIN H. BERNSTEIN

MELVYN KRAUSS here stumbles through the thickets of international affairs armed only with the analytical tools and moral assumptions of a free-market economist. During his whirlwind survey of this foreign terrain, he casts a jaundiced eye at those nations generally considered most well-disposed toward the United States and its aims, and finds that in fact their attitudes diverge too widely from ours for them to be useful friends.

Indeed, according to Krauss, not only NATO but all our alliances leave us and our allies weaker militarily than we would be without them. If, he concludes, our aim is to strengthen our defenses against the Soviet Union and its satellites, we must begin by withdrawing our troops from Europe, from Korea, and even from Japan (unless we can manage to persuade the Japanese to pay for the defenses with which we provide them). As for the prospect of intervening in the Third World, the experience of Vietnam teaches that never again must we commit troops to combat there, except in the case of another sure thing like Grenada.

The weaknesses of this book are manifest at every level of analysis, starting with Krauss's conception of the NATO alliance itself and what it is for. He complains that our NATO allies simply do not pull their financial weight; in 1983, he points out, we spent nearly twice the percentage of Gross Domestic Product (6.6) on defense that the European NATO nations did (3.6). In leveling this charge, Krauss fails to consider that NATO is a regional alliance while we are a global power with commitments and interests in, for example, Central America and the Pacific Basin that our allies do not share. Nor does he acknowledge that part of the reason we pay so much for defense is that we have chosen to have all-volunteer armed forces which cost substantially more than the conscript armies that several of our NATO allies have had the domestic courage to retain. Instead, he concludes from his numbers that we are subsidizing the West Europeans' defenses, while they are putting the money we save them into their welfare programs—a state of affairs that rouses to fury the free-market economist within him.

When we subsidize NATO's defense, Krauss argues, we do not merely allow our European allies to pay as little as they can get away with for the defense of their own continent; we also encourage them to adopt a cringing, self-serving attitude toward the Soviet Union. For subsidies, as we know from domestic experience, weaken the moral fiber of their recipients. As things stand now, we have given the Europeans every incentive to continue to worship at the hollow shrine of détente, a religion that provides them in turn with the arguments they require to justify their paltry contributions to NATO's defense coffers. Conversely, if they had to face the Soviet threat without the support of disproportionately large U.S. subventions, the West Europeans would of necessity face reality, acknowledge their danger, and thus be compelled to increase their defense expenditures and alter their rhetoric and world view accordingly.

Krauss sees no need to look further than this to explain why our West European allies should profess a view of the international arena so different from ours. He does not consider how their common borders with the Soviet Union, as opposed to our intervening half-continent and Atlantic Ocean, might influence the positions they have adopted. Nor does he recall our late entry into two world wars, which may have suggested to Europeans that their interests are not always identical with ours.

This is not to say that Krauss is wrong about the failings of the Europeans. As he points out, they have adopted a policy of bribing the Soviets not to invade them by offering entangling economic subsidies like the natural-gas pipeline. (We do similar things, but not, he insists, to the same extent.) According to Rand Corporation estimates, OECD export credit subsidies to all Communist countries in 1981 stood at $3 billion; Krauss concludes, fairly, that such subsidies only make the Soviets a more formidable and expensive enemy for the United States to counter.

In addition, many of our NATO allies regularly dissent publicly from our positions abroad, or condone Soviet while condemning U.S. actions, especially in the Third World. As Henry S. Rowen of the Hoover Institution, whom Krauss quotes in this context, has noted, the Europeans regard the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as "deplorable" but as requiring no response on their part, and they see the new Soviet presence in Syria as a legitimate reaction to an illegitimate attack on Lebanon by America's ally, Israel. On the other hand, they view U.S. pressures against the Marxist-Leninist regime in Nicaragua as anti-democratic; they condemned our invasion of Grenada as a bullying overreaction to a trivial squabble; and so forth. In his own list of European sins, Krauss has included a longish section denouncing the degenerate attitude of our NATO allies toward Middle Eastern terrorists.

Even if this last rings embarrassingly hollow against the background of our own, newly revealed, behavior toward Iran, Krauss has a point here: continuous disagreements on individual foreign-policy issues and the differences underlying those disagreements do threaten the alliance. The U.S. is not a very self-confident player in the international arena. While the Reagan administration has groped for a renewed, post-Vietnam sense of national purpose in foreign affairs, relations with our NATO allies have been greatly strained by their constant, carping criticisms, which play upon our own internal divisions and self-doubts.

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ASIDE from all this, Krauss also maintains that our assumption of a disproportionately large share of NATO's defense burden no longer makes strategic sense. When the U.S. had clear nuclear superiority over the USSR, relying on our nuclear arsenal to deter a Soviet attack on Europe was a credible policy. But our present situation of nuclear parity, Krauss believes, has reduced our declared reliance on a nuclear first strike to "99-percent bluff" (as Irving Kristol has put it). A corollary of this view is that a non-nuclear war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact has therefore become a dangerous possibility, and that is a war we would lose, and quickly. To support this claim Krauss cites a remark once made by General Bernard Rogers, the U.S. commander of NATO's European military forces, to the effect that if Moscow launched a conventional attack, the length of time NATO could hold back Soviet forces would be measured in days.

If Krauss truly believes that our nuclear deterrent lacks credibility, and that the Soviets could win a conventional war in less than a week, he fails to ask the logical question: what keeps them from attacking? Either they must be content with the status quo or they do not share Krauss's assessment of the strategic situation. As for how NATO's forces would stack up against those of the Soviet Union in a conventional conflict, this is an immensely complicated issue on which reasonable experts can and do disagree. Krauss's view is not that of a reasonable expert, however, or even a well-informed amateur, but that of a polemical journalist. And in any case, however pessimistic one's view of NATO's holding capacity, it is hard to see how that capacity would improve if the U.S. withdrew its forces from Europe. Certainly the reader of a book advocating such a withdrawal deserves more than a single supporting quotation from a general in the field: rare is the commanding officer who feels that he has been given perfectly adequate resources to carry out his mission.

Krauss wants us to believe that in the event of war we should have to choose almost immediately between defeat on the one hand, and escalation to nuclear conflict on the other hand. By positing the choice in this way he means to reveal the gross irresponsibility of the welfare-addicted Europeans, who persist in refusing to help raise the nuclear threshold through heavier contributions to the alliance's conventional defense capabilities. He thus arrives at a kind of syllogism: Europe's welfare systems, by keeping the Europeans from increasing their conventional forces, are putting the very survival of the planet in jeopardy; it is our defense umbrella that makes possible their irresponsible commitment to welfare over defense; therefore, all our problems and theirs will be solved when we remove the defense umbrella by withdrawing our troops.

THE economist in Krauss is transfixed above all by the amount of cash the United States would save by such a withdrawal. A conservative estimate has put the cost of NATO to the American taxpayer in 1986 at $134 billion. In his NATO-free vision, Krauss would not relocate the 360,000 American troops now stationed in Europe, but would simply discharge them and reduce the American armed forces by that number. He would thereby save the country the entire $134 billion. Next, with just under half that sum, he would buy a Strategic Defense Initiative behind which "Fortress America" could safely sit. With the rest he would cut a hefty chunk from the nation's budget deficit.

And why stop with NATO? Our European allies look like wild-eyed spenders when compared with the Japanese. The West Germans, for example, spend three-and-one-half times the proportion of their economic production on defense that the Japanese do. Still, Krauss goes easier on the Japanese because they at least show no sign of becoming reconciled to the Soviet occupation and recent fortification of Japan's Northern Territories; they have not tried to bribe their way into the Soviet Union's good graces with a "détente-as-defense" strategy; and they have never given more than 2.5 percent of their trade to the Soviet Union.

Nevertheless, since the United States has had to keep its own budget deficit high so that the Japanese do not have to increase theirs, Krauss wants them to pay for the defense that we provide. He would have them do this through a "compensatory resource transfer" which would offend neither Japanese antimilitarism nor the U.S. taxpayer. He finds precedent for such a scheme in the existing arrangements under which Japan since 1971 has reimbursed the United States for the 25,100 U.S. Marines stationed on Okinawa to the tune of $1 billion per year.

How are we to induce the Japanese suddenly to pay vast sums for what they have been receiving free? Once again, the answer lies in our leaving NATO: Krauss believes that the spectacle of a U.S. troop withdrawal from Western Europe would so shock the Japanese they would have to reconsider their own minimalist defense posture. Shocked they certainly would be. Whether the popular reaction would permit even so friendly a regime as the present one in Japan to begin turning billions of dollars over to the U.S. Treasury is rather less certain. It is absurd to assume, as Krauss does, that democratic and Western-leaning Pacific countries have no alternatives but the U.S. at any price.

THEN there is South Korea. According to Krauss, Jimmy Carter was correct in 1977 to want to begin a phased withdrawal of our ground forces there, but for the wrong reasons. Misguidedly, Carter was reacting to what he took to be the human-rights violations of the Park Chung Hee regime. Krauss, who would never be guilty of such "moral imperialism," would nevertheless proceed with what our former President was dissuaded from doing then.

For the South Koreans, too, emerge from this book as defense "free-riders." Even though they actually spend about as much of their total economic production on defense as we do, Krauss considers this grossly inadequate, for three reasons. First, the South Koreans are (technically) at war with North Korea, so they have no right to a

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peacetime defense budget. Second, the North Koreans spend somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of *their* GDP on defense. Finally, the presence of our troops in the peninsula keeps South Korean defense spending artificially low. It is the American "trip-wire" force that makes the South Koreans feel comfortable about their security problem with their neighbor to the north, and this is a bad thing because if they were more insecure they would spend more money. Why, Krauss asks, can they not be more like the Israelis, who in a similarly precarious position, but without an American presence to reassure them, spend over 35 percent of their GDP on defense? (Elsewhere, Krauss has rude words even for the Israelis, whom he accuses of being fiscally irresponsible and of having a too-powerful lobby in Washington.)

Finally, there is the Third World in general. There Krauss wants us to support our developing allies—he approves of aid to the Nicaraguan resistance, for example—so long as we do not do so with troops. While he never explicitly considers possible scenarios, he makes it unequivocally clear what course of action he would wish to see adopted if Nicaragua were to invade Costa Rica or Honduras; if the Vietnamese were to march into Thailand; if a Soviet-backed National People's Army were to begin wreaking havoc with the new Aquino regime in the Philippines; if the North Koreans were to have another go at reuniting the peninsula; or if the Syrians and their allies were to try to destroy Israel. In all these instances, he would advocate arming, equipping, and training our friends but never falling into the trap of actually defending them. Whatever the crisis, however grave the danger to our allies' survival and to our regional interests, our troops—or what would be left of them—must stay home.

Collectively, the term Melvyn Krauss applies to his preferred policy is "global unilateralism"; actually, the proper term is isolationism. But whatever the position is called, these days Krauss is far from alone in holding it. Indeed, at the very moment when Soviet military power is expanding on all fronts, growing numbers of American observers have begun to advocate jettisoning those alliances which, whatever their imperfections, have served the West well to the present. In the face of admittedly complicated problems—the cracks and dissension in NATO, the development of movements such as West Germany's Greens, New Zealand's naive assertion of its freedom from the nuclear threat—these neophyte strategists seek simple, comprehensive solutions which they mistakenly imagine will help arouse the sense of national purpose in us and/or our allies. (One is reminded of George VI who, on learning of the fall of France in 1940, remarked, "Personally, I feel happier now that we have no allies to be polite to and pamper.") Such a solution is that offered by Melvyn Krauss with his prescription for universal disengagement.

Although Krauss's argument is often intricate (perhaps a better word would be "convoluted"), it is dogmatic and entirely lacks subtlety. He makes only very occasional concessions to differences among the NATO nations, for example, and virtually none to the disparities among the various political groups within those nations. He seems indifferent to the fact that there are NATO supporters in Europe working for larger defense budgets. Similarly, he ignores the fact that those who oppose such increases share his wish to see the alliance disintegrate not because that would strengthen but because it would weaken the West. But whether our European friends would be hurt by the actions that he recommends America take, and our enemies helped, are matters of sublime indifference to him. He knows only that he is not going to pay for anyone's welfare system.

How NATO Weakens the West includes no analysis of how NATO strengthens the West, or could be made to do so. Krauss might have asked, but does not, how, if the Europeans (and Japanese) contribute too little to the common defense, we could attempt to find ways to get them to pay more. There are such ways: we could, for example, link our contributions to theirs through some reasonable *quid pro quo* arrangement. Alternatively, as Eliot Cohen has suggested, NATO itself could be restructured, with the U.S. increasing air and nuclear forces on the continent on condition that the Europeans increase their conventional ground forces.

Clearly, such suggestions would strike no responsive chord in Melvyn Krauss, for there appears to be nothing in him that wishes to strengthen the Western alliance. Indeed, should we desert the alliance, and its members then fail to respond by creating a Third Independent Force capable of dealing with the Soviets on its own, this would only prove they were not worthy allies in the first place, and be further evidence we were well rid of them. Krauss cannot lose in this debate with himself. He longs only to shake us free from NATO and our other parasitic alliances, and to live in splendid isolation behind his SDI.

Without NATO, however, it is difficult to see why we would need Krauss's SDI. What reason would the Soviet Union have to attack us, bereft of all our allies and without any commitments beyond our frontiers? We should present so little danger to them as to be irrelevant, having conceded defeat in the struggle that has occupied us since the end of World War II.

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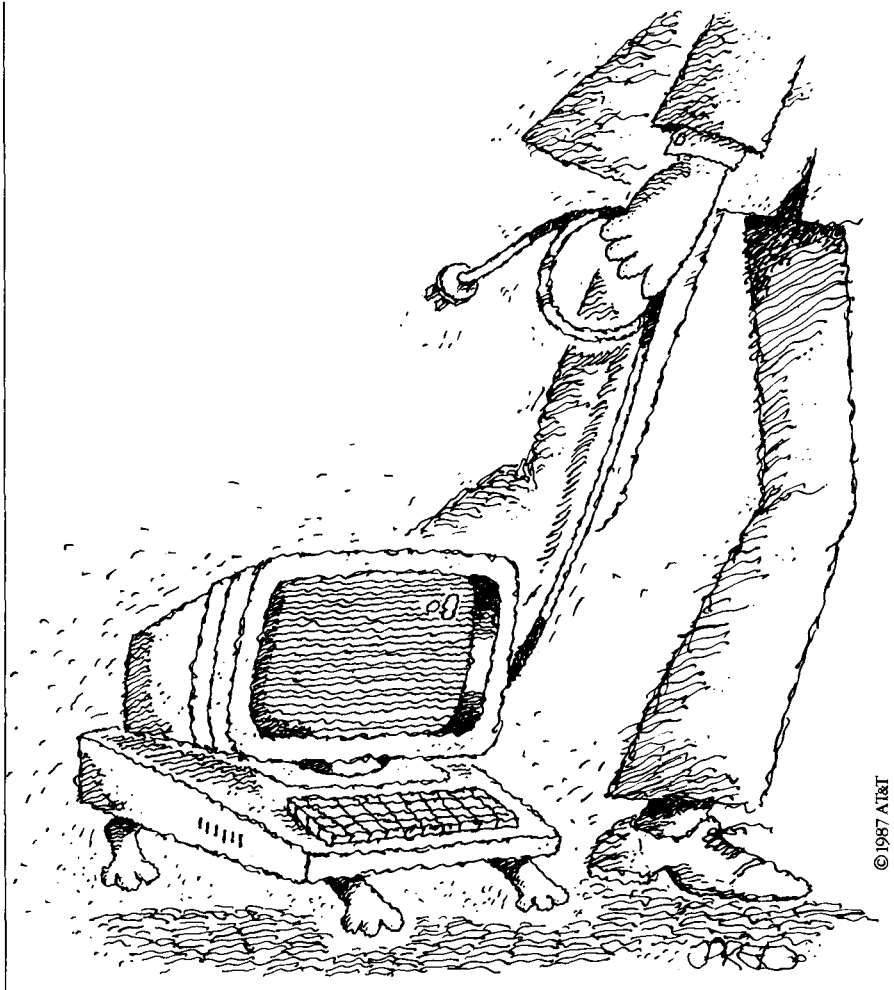

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